

PETER BLUM^{GALLERY}

Marina Adams

Works on Paper: A Survey

April 9 – May 29, 2026

Artist Reception: April 9, 6 – 8 pm

Artist Conversation + Book Launch: May 19, 6 – 8 pm



Peter Blum Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition by Marina Adams entitled, *Works on Paper: A Survey*. Spanning over three decades from 1994 to 2025, this marks the first exhibition dedicated to surveying the New York and Italy based artist's works on paper. On view from April 9, 2026, with an artist reception from 6–8 pm, it runs through May 29, 2026 at 176 Grand St, New York, NY. An artist's conversation at the gallery with curators Raymond Foye and Claire Gilman is on May 19, 2026. A new 108-page hardcover publication, *Marina Adams–Works on Paper: A Survey*, accompanies the exhibition.

Marina Adams has developed a dynamic practice of clear and powerful abstract language that explores the possibilities of form and movement through the structural power of color. Understanding abstraction not as theory but as a "synthesis of body and mind," Adams's work embraces what John Keats termed "negative capability"—the ability to exist within uncertainties and mysteries without reaching after fact or reason. Drawing inspiration from the natural world, textiles, and the rhythmic cadences of poetry and music, Adams engages in a timeless dialogue with Modernist artists—including Henri Matisse, Joan Mitchell, and Willem de Kooning—while maintaining a singular and contemporary voice.

As curator Raymond Foye notes: "In Marina Adams's work, content and form continually swap places. Her shapes often suggest vessels—the urn, the body, the cello, things that are both full and empty, resonant and still. Masterful drawing and brushwork trace the contours of a personal space, an experience of self, where forms move freely but forcefully, sometimes pushing, sometimes yielding. This drama is most keenly played out in the bounding lines, where Adams takes the work to the edge and leaves it there. Energy continues off the page in every direction. To understand these works, imagine mass communication, and then imagine its opposite."

Spanning from 1994 to 2025, the exhibition traces a "full circle" evolution of form in Adams's visual vocabulary, beginning with her time in Italy during the 1990s. Inspired by the essential structures of umbrella pines, her *Roma* series (1994) articulates the relationship between line and shape, where the edge of a tree becomes the edge of a leaf, opening up space. Reflecting a much later relocation to Long

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Island in 2021, the newest works in the exhibition from 2025 display a return to nature in these "tree forms" that have evolved into a rhythmic architecture where the organic and the geometric become indistinguishable.

A cornerstone of the presentation is the large-scale work entitled, *1996_135x119*. This abutting three-sheet composition from a series first shown in Heide Fasnacht's TriBeCa loft in 1996, showcases her gestural energy and the enduring influence of natural forms. Similarly, several examples from the *Erotics* series of the 2000s provide a link to her more distilled abstractions. By utilizing collage and appropriating images from Japanese *Shunga* and the *Kama Sutra*, Adams used found fabric to "reveal and conceal" sexual forms. This initial impulse to layer and cover has since transformed into an exploration of how color and form occupy space as a singular, resonant presence.

The collective experience is explored in major groupings such as the twenty-sheet work *New Alphabet* (2010). Adams's shapes take on the weight of a lexicon of color saturated symbols that feel ancient yet new, suggesting a way of communicating beyond speech. *Body and Soul* (2017) pushes this further, channeling the improvisational spirit of Black classical music and the fluidity of the human form. Here, vessel shapes become more apparent—curving, organic lines that suggest the hollow of a cello or the arch of a torso in saturated colors. *Italia Tre* (2019) reflects a return to the light and palette of the Mediterranean, where the balance between "the struggle and the ease" is played out in vibrant, interlocking planes of color. The emphasis on the organic and the immediate is found in a newer work, *La Danse* (2024). Comprised of nine sheets, this lively grouping functions as a rhythmic architecture where the distinction between the tree forms of her formative years and her later geometry becomes intertwined.

Central to the works is Adams's technical range and commitment to transparency and directness as exemplified by a selection of later individual works. By working primarily with gouache, acrylic, Flashe, and crayon, she avoids the reflective sheen of oil, favoring matte surfaces that pull the viewer into the "physicality of drawing." These media allow for a quickness of hand, capturing the energy of the initial gesture before it can be overthought. Yet in works from such series as *Magic Square* (2017) and *A Series of Dreams* (2022), Adams also employs watercolor to achieve a unique translucency that departs from her more opaque works. With more fluid washes, her forms soften, capturing a dreamlike state anchored by her characteristically dynamic and rhythmic brushwork.

Marina Adams (b. 1960, Orange, NJ) is based in New York, NY, Bridgehampton, NY, and the hills outside of Parma, Italy. She earned degrees from Tyler School of Art at Temple University (Philadelphia) and Columbia University (New York). She is the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (2016) and the Award of Merit Medal for Painting from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2018). Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (Fort Worth, TX), Buffalo AKG Art Museum (Buffalo, NY), Longlati Foundation (Shanghai), Colby College Museum of Art (Waterville, ME), K11 Art Foundation (Hong Kong, China), and The Rennie Collection (Vancouver, Canada) among others.

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Gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10 am – 6 pm; Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm

Image: Marina Adams, *New Alphabet*, 2010, gouache on handmade Indian Khadi paper, overall: 78 x 100 inches (198 x 254 cm), twenty sheets: 12 x 12 inches (30.5 x 30.5 cm), each. Courtesy the artist.