ambiguity, and in the way tangible forms lose substantiality and
become pure light, shadow and motion. The lyrical accretion of
fragments in Vance's recent endeavors invokes collage, while their
rhythmic interplay of solid and void conjures the sculptural space of,
for example, works by Archipenko.

For all this cross-disciplinary affinity, Vance's practice is funda-
mentally rooted in the liquidity of paint and the balletic, impro-
vvisational movements of the hand. Scraping with a palette knife,
Vance thins her strokes to a gleaming translucency, occasionally
baring the weave of the supporting canvas. As she invests the linear
forms with directional energy, she brings notions of pace and dura-
tion to the fore. Shapes overlap and interpenetrate, viscous plumes
stretch, curl and bend. Some have firm contours and blurred interi-
ors, some are rimmed by light and some made weighty by shadow.
Gravity may be alluded to, but is moot. Landscape suggests itself,
as do bodily curves, angles and depressions. One area of a canvas
might grant the traction of comprehension, in terms of spatial
logic and coherence, but others will fruitfully contradict it. These
paintings are not, in any case, maps serving destinations as much as
promising roads, drawing themselves as they go.

—Leah Ollman

LESLEY VANCE
David Kordansky

With no apparent fronts or backs, the forms in Lesley Vance's
paintings are slippery as Möbius strips. Edge becomes plane,
plane dissolves. Broad ribbons fold over and peel away. Inner
elides into outer, outer into inner. Bulges flatten, and flat planes
swell. The impenetrable turns permeable before dissipating
entirely.

Six or seven years ago, Vance, based in Los Angeles, was paint-
ing still lifes haunted by Zurbarán and Cotán. She continues to
work from studio arrangements of rocks, shells, horns and ceramic
objects that she sets up inside a cardboard box, lights dramatically
and photographs. Her Spanish forebears have receded somewhat;
they are traceable mostly in the exquisite play of sheer luminosity
emerging from deep dark ground. The legibility and palpability of
her subjects have markedly diminished. What remains might be
read as time performing itself in space. Slippery.

The oil paintings (all 2013) are modest in size, many as
small as 9 by 11 inches, making for intimate encounters. Vance
paints wet on wet, finishing each piece in one or two days. They
are less meditations on than responses to the history of potent,
mysterious image-making (she counts Magritte and de Chirico
as formative) and, more directly, to the kind of still-life photog-
raphy in which the image is rendered as a matter of light and
dark tonal passages on a single plane. What she conceives is a
distinctive sort of illusionistic abstraction, its visual presence a
balance between elusive secret and seductive fact.

The work has an uncannily strong kinship with Francis
Bruguière's 1920s photographs of cut paper, similar in their spatial

Lesley Vance:
Untitled, 2013, oil
on linen, 10 by 12
inches, at David
Kordansky.