

# Artist Lucy Bull Invites Others Into Her Cosmos

By Kat Harriman | 2020

In 2014, Lucy Bull found Los Angeles and stayed. On the phone, the painter confesses she still misses fall on the East Coast, where she grew up. Right after graduating from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she decided the sunshine did something for her brain. Those Rorschach moments of hot clarity remain visible on the skins of Bull's optically charged paintings, which drag the viewer into a cinematic trance. In the past, some have likened Bull's canvases to songs, in the way that they produce durational experiences as the eye is drawn over the kinetic optics of the 2-D surface.

Music is a recurring inspiration for Bull, but it's the automatic brushwork of the Surrealists and their filmmaking peers that have loomed large in her thinking recently, in addition to her forever muse: Hollywood and the weird mythologies that spin outwards from it. Her cinephilia bleeds not only into her relationship with her chosen hometown, but also into her compositions, which purposefully drag out time to allow fantasy the head start it needs to catch the tail of the truth. "Time is everything," Bull says bluntly. "I've always been jealous of filmmakers, who expect no one will leave the theater. When I'm painting, I'm always thinking about creating the same kind of psychic space that a movie does because I think it's better when you are invited to feel your way through an experience. It's through indulging our unconscious that we find reality." In addition to the space she makes in her paintings, Bull is known for her exhibition program, which she's been running out of her apartment since 2017. The program is perfunctorily titled, "From the Desk of Lucy Bull," as most of the works are exhibited on a dedicated plank in her home, but the truth is that the shows tend to spill over. There have been neighbor-rousing performances, shoulder-to-shoulder parties and rowdy meals. Like LA, Bull radiates with a generosity that attracts wild energy to her sublime abstractions, some of which were on view this December in Arles, thanks to a High Art gallery annex.



A SELF-PORTRAIT BY LUCY BULL (2020)