

Cecilie Norgaard

*Working Title*

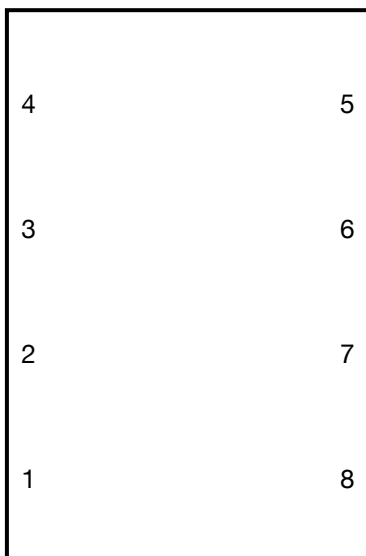
Vienna, June 2021

The pattern in *Untitled (JOB)* is copied from a tablecloth I bought because I loved its pattern. I wanted to get deep into it, to understand its dynamics and rhythm, so I sketched it out in a painting. Reproducing a pattern feels like an organizational task, about detecting repetition, similarity, and deviances. And, perhaps, ways of fitting things together. Somewhere inside of the work, a possibility of expanding the pattern in an alphabetical direction dawned on me. The pattern and the letters operate on two different cognitive levels that eventually combine inside of the same structure. *Untitled (JOB)* had to stand open for several months before I could finish it, a process through which connections between ornamental and behavioral patterns as seen through a prism of labor developed. These ideas carried through the rest of the works.

Several months later, I found *A Handbook of Ornament*, an instructive book on making ornamental patterns from 1898, intended for scholars of applied arts. The patterns in the book are compiled on the basis of the character of the pattern, rather than national or practical contexts. For example, the book refers to grid-structured patterns as based on “networks”. That caught my interest because of the social connotation and how the mega-modernist symbol of the grid is presented as an instructional form to reproduce another’s work. The pattern in the painting is copied from the book and set as surrounding or margin for a depiction of a copying machine, the kind found largely in institutional spaces like schools and offices. In *Copy Job* I wanted to have the grid map the surface of the canvas as an institutionally framed discipline of repetition and reference (network) rather than originality.

*Square Workspace* is a grid becoming figurative—a section of cubicles. I assume relationship between a modernist notion of the grid and a capitalist way of organizing workers in office—and their idealizations of regularity, similarity, repetition, materialism, and other such categories. Because these categories are also traits shared by the practice of ornamental pattern-making, and because I still wanted to look more at the ornamental in the context of performed labor, I turned generic workers into daisies. To contrast before-mentioned idealizations, the scene is framed by a muddy, organic scenario of brown and yellow.

These are examples of the thinking and symbolic play that continues to excite me and that I exercise in the paintings to make them reflect on themselves. *Panel Discussion* sets out to do so by way of several of the dichotomies I find inherent to painting as a medium. Here the grid speaks of basic width and height, front and back. The picture is divided in central and marginal space, inside and outside, that is furthermore divided in flatness and perspective, figuration and abstraction. What the painting depicts in its figurative realm is an empty conference room, potentially waiting to be filled by debaters.



- 1 *Untitled (JOB)*, 100x81 cm, tempera, heilerde, oil on cotton, 2020
- 2 *Copy Job*, 59x51 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 3 *Exercising in the Margins of Abstraction*, 83x65 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 4 *Mono Culture*, 80x45 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 5 *The 4 Corners of the World*, 100x85 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 6 *Square Workspace*, 61x48 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 7 *Panel Discussion*, 75x65 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021
- 8 *Untitled (Terminal)*, 130x70 cm, tempera, oil on cotton, 2021