

## Artist Statement - Kellie Lehr

What does it mean to fold? Folding can involve many things in both art and life—everything from DNA to our skin folds. There's an embodiment that speaks to change, time, and space. Mathematically, folding helps us solve problems. In day-to-day life, it helps us organize chaos. My latest series of works focuses on the use of raw canvas, exploring alternative ways of presenting paintings and utilizing the simple act of folding. The work consists of abstract paintings, soft sculptures, and soft books made with ink, charcoal, acrylic, and oil on raw canvas. I start with an unstretched cotton canvas that I fold, ink, wash, and dry outside in the sun. The folding is slow, methodical, and tactile, not exalted. It speaks to the everyday activity of living in the world. It also contains tension. Areas are hidden and revealed, patterns made and disrupted, the unexpected embraced.

I'm interested in how frequencies, patterns, and gestures can create a flux of time and space and how the canvas holds a memory of its previous dimensional states. I see painting as both a performative action and a ritual where I am a co-creator in the process. Other movements and artists inform this process: Supports/Surface, Neo-Concrete (Lygia Clark), Pattern and Decoration, Color Field, and Feminist Performance Art (Mierle Laderman Ukeles). The process of folding is physical and feels intimate. Folding, unfolding, and refolding is a reiterative process. A pattern emerges. There are infinite ways to fold, and although my materials are humble, the options feel limitless.

<https://kellielehr.com/home.html>