

I entered painting through movement before image or even concept. My approach is rooted in the ideas and practices that I encountered in dance, over forty years ago. Merce Cunningham and John Cage profoundly influenced my understanding of how structure could encompass the unexpected as well as the deliberate. I began to recognize actions themselves as generative: forces of resistance, constraint, propulsion, and transformation could become the substance of a work. My paintings do not depict movement; movement is their cipher.

The possibilities of fluid acrylic paint allow me to bring larger gestures into relation with minute events within the surface. The dimensions and proportions of the support establish the conditions in which these events unfold. Scale is unstable: a seemingly incidental mark can become structural from across the room, while up close, an expansive gesture can dissolve into a fragile accumulation of smaller events.

The painting changes as the viewer moves. There is no fixed vantage point from which it can be fully known. Proximity reveals one order; distance produces another. Relationships continually shift, making looking a form of participation.

Each painting is a field of forces, negotiating impulse and deliberation, chance and intention. I am less interested in making a specific image than in creating conditions through which images and their associations can coalesce. The paintings are meant to remain open—to resist certainty and reward sustained looking. In that encounter, the familiar can become strange and the seemingly insignificant can become essential.

Naomi Schlinke 2026