

Zach Fischman
Liz Markus, Art As Golf
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Liz Markus (b. 1967, Buffalo, New York) doesn't like to struggle. That doesn't mean her life is easy, or that she's any stranger to difficulty. But she's tried to devise a painterly practice that doesn't trade in ardor, or at least the type we're used to seeing on canvas. Markus grew up in Buffalo, and spent much of her childhood at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, whose impressive collection of Abstract Expressionism is a kind of crash course in what struggle, and particularly *masculine* struggle, might look like in paint. It's not that Markus dislikes this type of painting – indeed, she spent much of her development working through such styles and influences – but rather, as all painters must do, she went searching for a style that suited her aims. And so rather than do battle on canvas, Markus populated her work with hippies and stuffed animals, and more recently, wealthy members of the international jet set. In recent years, she found herself watching a lot of golf, and was taken with the quiet atmosphere and verdant landscapes she saw on screen. She noticed a parallel to working in the studio, watching golfers trying to get in the zone and hit a ball, seemingly effortlessly, into an impossibly small hole. She devoted a large painting to the comparison, rendering the course in washy skeins of green on unprimed canvas, and lettering the name of the game in big purple letters at the bottom. The studio, and the problem of painting, is a difficult course with treacherous obstacles, but every so often Markus shoots under par, and makes a painting that records her happiness instead of her struggle.



Golf, 2013
oil on canvas
54 x 72 in

