

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

Emily Joyce

Deal, or, How I Became Radioactive

January 17 — February 21, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 17, 5–8 pm

Free and open to the public | Artist in attendance

Returning for her third solo exhibition with the gallery, David B. Smith Gallery is pleased to kick off the 2026 exhibition season with *Deal, or, How I Became Radioactive*, by California-based artist Emily Joyce. Featured in the Main Gallery, Joyce's use of geometric abstraction to explore hidden systems, art history, and games comes bursting to the surface in this expansive yet sharply focused exhibition.

Following in a long line of artists from Italian Renaissance master Piero della Francesca to computer art pioneer Vera Molnar, Joyce investigates systems and connections: natural, mathematical, scientific, and philosophical. Explored through her special brand of visual and linguistic riddles, Joyce flattens the distance between time and space, using high-key geometric forms to puzzle at the eternal mysteries of our world and better understand our own time.

Inquisitive and playful, *Deal, or, How I Became Radioactive* incorporates essential qualities of both human nature and fundamental scientific concepts through the lens of games, namely, playing cards. Notions of freewill vs. determinism and chance vs. strategy are investigated in all the paintings presented—often quite literally. For example, for *All In (Three Hands)*, Joyce used a shuffled deck of cards to determine the painting's subject and composition. Pick a card, any card.

Borrowing from the philosopher Alan Watts's "Game of Life" concept that life isn't a serious problem to be solved but a playful dance or game to be experienced, Joyce's compositions feature figure eights, spirals, playing card suits, and backward script—details that offer a sense of levity across visual and conceptual forms.

Measuring the certainty of scientific truth against human intuition, Joyce still allows ample space for beauty in the equation. Her artistic practice is deeply research-based and curiosity-driven—think of the artist's studio as a laboratory. The results of Joyce's inquiries are the fanciful yet rigorous, buoyant yet logical paintings in *Deal, or, How I Became Radioactive*, an exhibition teeming with visually stunning discoveries.

About Emily Joyce

Emily Joyce (b. 1976, Illinois) attended the Glasgow School of Art and the Rhode Island School of Design where she received her BFA in painting. Since 1999 her work has been included in numerous exhibitions at galleries and institutions throughout the US and in Europe. Some highlights include: The Benton Museum of Art (Claremont, CA), *Parallel Play*, The Museum of Contemporary Art (Denver), *Aftereffect: Georgia O'Keeffe and Contemporary Painting*, the Denver Art Museum, Human Resources (Los Angeles), David B. Smith Gallery (Denver), Inman Gallery (Houston), Sara Meltzer Gallery (New York), Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (Berkeley), The Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Art Pace (San Antonio), The Tang Teaching Museum (Saratoga Springs, NY), Caroline O'Brien Gallery (Amsterdam), The Palais de Tokyo (Paris), and Glassbox (Geneva). Her book of visual poems *A Cigar Caught in The Lilies* was published by Hesse Press (Los Angeles) in 2019.



Emily Joyce, *Oh Elizabeth! Nine of Hearts*, 2025, acrylic paint and metal leaf on canvas, 48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm)

About David B. Smith Gallery

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions.

David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).

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