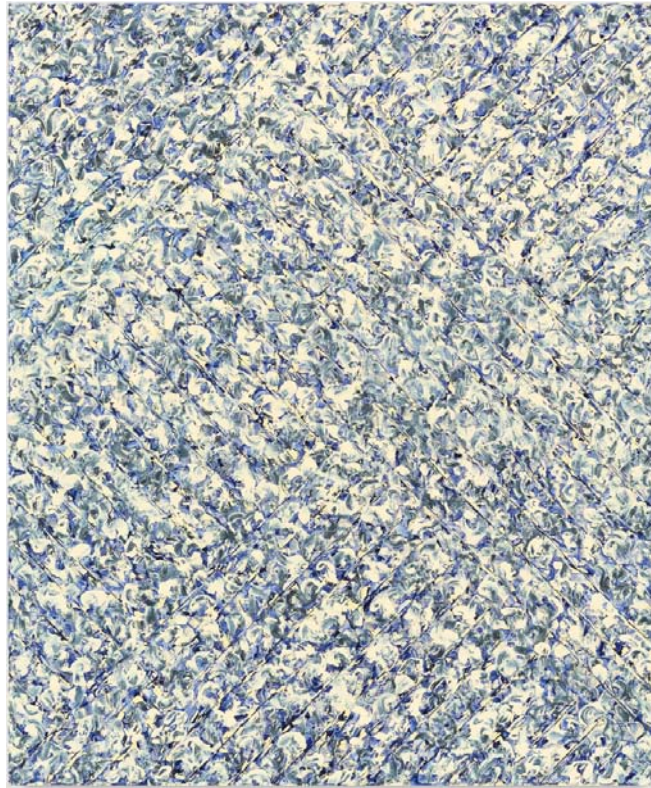


PAULA COOPER GALLERY

JULIAN LETHBRIDGE

521 West 21st Street

Friday, September 17 – Saturday, October 16, 2021



A remarkable lightness emanates from a group of new paintings by Julian Lethbridge completed over the past two years. In striking contrast to earlier works, the artist's structural foundation and liberated hand are illuminated in radiant color. Deep blues, iridescent whites, and vibrant reds enliven the richly textured abstractions to inform an immense spatial depth and atmospheric brightness.

The underlying formal geometry of each work informs the overall composition, and is revealed to varying degrees. After applying an initial layer of paint, Lethbridge scores predetermined lines into the surface of the canvas, pressing in such a way that the paint rises around the incision into a sharp ridge. The resulting network of raised lines forms a composition in relief, providing a kind of sculptural base on which the brushwork will take place. By fixing a geometric foundation of concentric rectangles, waving lines, or parallel arches before beginning the brushwork, the artist frees his hand entirely to focus on the application of an increasingly bold palette of complimentary colors, typically in two tones. As the tightly curled layers of paint and pigmented oil stick move over them, the lines halt or reverse the flow, creating alternating positive and negative brushstrokes. At certain stages Lethbridge uses the foundational lines to guide the selective removal of paint, creating smooth veil-like absences that reveal layers of depth. The underlying geometry tames the tightly wielded flow of pigment, while the necessarily arbitrary brushstrokes reintroduce ambiguity to the structure and inform an overall rhythm.

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Born in Sri Lanka in 1947 and brought up primarily in England, Julian Lethbridge was educated at Winchester College and Cambridge University. In recent years his work has been presented in one-person exhibitions at Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco (2018) and Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin (2017). His work has been widely exhibited throughout the United States and Europe and can be found in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), The Tate Gallery (London), The Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago), and The National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.). In 1988, Lethbridge was awarded the Francis J. Greenberger Award. He lives and works in New York.

Image: Julian Lethbridge, *Carpenter's Square*, 2021, oil and pigment stick on linen, 72 x 60 in. (182.9 x 152.4 cm), signed and dated verso, JL-630-PTG

For more information and images, please contact the gallery:
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