

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Stanley Whitney *TwentyTwenty*

November 2 – December 18, 2021
504 West 24th Street, New York

Lisson Gallery is pleased to present *TwentyTwenty*, an exhibition of new paintings by Stanley Whitney created over the past year. Color continues to galvanize Whitney's compositions, each block of pigment dictated by its relationship to the one before it. The artist's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery advances his exploration of color, and features a return to a horizontal format with dimensions new to Whitney's enduring body of work. *TwentyTwenty* precedes two major presentations for Whitney: a new stained-glass commission for the Baltimore Museum of Art (December 2021) and the opening of *The Italian Paintings* at Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, presented by the Buffalo AKG Art Museum during the Venice Biennale 2022.

Stanley Whitney has explored the dynamics of color for over five decades, honing a signature format of stacked, multi-colored shapes. Early in his career, Whitney featured space in between his marks, seeking a sense of airiness and light within separated zones of color. Over time colors were stacked more intimately, creating a juxtaposition of limitless range and controlled borders. These current configurations were realized amid a move to Italy and visit to Egypt in the mid-1990s. Whitney studied the stratified sarcophagi in Rome's Etruscan Museum and the relationship between each object on Italian still-life painter Giorgio Morandi's canvases. It was the perceived humanity within ancient buildings and architecture, Whitney's consideration of each brick and the order in which they were laid, that led the artist to tighten the structure of his paintings and empower the dialogue between each brick of color to inform the next.

Stanley Whitney's universal language of dynamic color and improvisational style continues in the new paintings on view. The exhibition incorporates a group of the artist's trademark square paintings with an arrangement that positions his profound relationship with color on a new pictorial plane. The new series, titled *Monk & Munch* after the American Jazz pianist Thelonious Monk and Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, translate Whitney's sequences of color onto a smaller rectangular format. *TwentyTwenty*, the work for which the exhibition is titled, demonstrates the artist's passages of color on a monumental scale. Within the conversation between every vibrant hue the artist elicits a rhythmic structure, echoing a musician moving along their sheet music. Whitney's enthusiasm for music and instinctive cadence is displayed in his execution and even in the titles of additional recent works, including *Keep on talkin' blues* (2021) and *Blue Note* (2020).

TwentyTwenty follows recent presentations of Stanley Whitney's early work from the 1990s at the gallery's East Hampton location, and an online exhibition of a group of works on paper from Whitney's *No to Prison Life* series, organized in collaboration with Art for Justice Fund, an organization founded by Agnes Gund to drive criminal justice reform.

For the Venice Biennale 2022, Stanley Whitney will open an exhibition at Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, presented by the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery). Co-curated by Cathleen Chaffee, Chief Curator, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, and Vincenzo de Bellis, Curator and Associate Director of Programs, Visual Arts, Walker Art Center, the exhibition marks the first time that Whitney will present works that have exclusively been created in Italy—from early works dating to the pivotal years he spent in Rome, to paintings made during subsequent summers spent in his studio near Parma throughout the last three decades. Whitney's work will be the subject of a major survey exhibition at the Buffalo AKG in Buffalo, NY, USA in 2023-24.

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Commissioned by The Baltimore Museum of Art, Stanley Whitney will debut a set of three, large-scale stained-glass windows to be installed inside the new Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies at the museum. The BMA will unveil the installation and new 2,500-square foot space on December 12, 2021.

About the artist

Stanley Whitney has been exploring the formal possibilities of color within ever-shifting grids of multi-hued blocks and all-over fields of gestural marks and passages, since the mid-1970s. His current motif, honed over many years, is the stacked composition of numerous saturated color fields, delineated by between three to five horizontal bands running the length of a canvas. The cumulative effect of Whitney's multicolored palette is not only one of masterly pictorial balance and a sense of continuum with other works in this ongoing series, but also that of fizzing, formal sensations caused by internal conflicts and resolutions within each painting. Taking his cues from early Minimalism, Color Field painters, jazz music and his favorite historical artists—Titian, Velázquez and Cézanne among them—Whitney is as much an exponent of the process-based, spatially-gridded square in art as Josef Albers, Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin and Carl Andre.

Stanley Whitney was born in Philadelphia in 1946 and lives and works in New York City and Parma, Italy. He holds a BFA from Kansas City Art Institute as well as an MFA from Yale University and is currently Professor emeritus of painting and drawing at Tyler School of Art, Temple University. Select solo exhibitions include 'Focus – Stanley Whitney' at the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, USA (2017) and 'Dance the Orange' at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY, USA (2015). Whitney has also been included in many prominent group shows, such as 'Call and Response', Longlati Foundation, Shanghai, China (2020); 'Inherent Structure', Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH, USA (2018); Documenta 14 in Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany (2017); 'Nero su Bianco' at the American Academy in Rome, Italy (2015); 'Outside the Lines: Black in the Abstract', Contemporary Art Museum of Houston, TX, USA (2014); 'Reinventing Abstraction: New York Painting in the 1980s', Cheim & Read, New York, NY, USA (2013); and 'Utopia Station' at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003). He has won prizes including the Robert De Niro Sr. Prize in Painting (2011), the American Academy of Arts and Letters Art Award (2010) and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship (1996). Whitney's work is included in public collections around the world, including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, KS, USA; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA, USA; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, USA.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, two in New York, one in Shanghai, as well as temporary spaces opened in 2020 in East Hampton and London's Mayfair district. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has represented many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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