

# GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian Gstaad to Present Recent Gouaches by Stanley Whitney

*Stanley Whitney: Paintings on Paper* Opens December 19, 2022

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Stanley Whitney, *Untitled*, 2017, gouache on paper, 22 × 30 inches (55.9 × 76.2 cm) © Stanley Whitney

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**GSTAAD, November 29, 2022**—Gagosian is pleased to celebrate the opening of the holiday season in Gstaad with *Stanley Whitney: Paintings on Paper*, an exhibition of gouaches made by the artist between 2015 and 2021. This is the third exhibition at the gallery in Gstaad, which opened in 2022.

Whitney’s paintings imbue loose “stacked” compositions with dynamic and unpredictable rhythms of color and space. Inspired by sources as diverse as experimental jazz and American quilt making, he marshals energetically brushed blocks and bars of pigment distinguished by transparency and tension wherever they intersect. Having worked in an abstract mode since the 1970s, he consolidated his current approach in the early 1990s during time spent in Italy. There, captivated by the effect of light on the façades of ancient Roman buildings such as the Colosseum and Palazzo Farnese, he achieved a new understanding of the relationship between color and geometry.

In the gouaches on view in Gstaad, which were made over a seven-year period, Whitney translates the square format of his large-scale canvas paintings to smaller works on paper. These compositions reveal the consistency of structure that undergirds his ostensibly spontaneous project. Far from being mere studies, they are robust independent undertakings in which the artist discovers new possibilities. Like other greats of abstract painting such as Ad Reinhardt and Al Taylor, Whitney takes the simplicity and flexibility of his medium and support as starting points from which to further extend his visual and atmospheric range.

Allowing the surface and tone of the paper to introduce texture and white space into his compositions, Whitney orchestrates a figure/ground interplay that is absent from his canvases, in which paint accounts for the works' entire coloration and fully covers their supports. At certain moments the works' stacked "parcels" of color bleed into one another, or into the bars that divide them horizontally, while at others they remain distinct. Throughout, however, the untouched surface of the paper intervenes to become a compositional element. This shift allows the grid to emerge here with especial clarity; it also makes apparent the point at which that structure disintegrates, transforming itself into something new.

Gouache, a water-based matte paint composed of ground pigments and plant-based binders, has a notable opacity derived from the addition of white fillers, such as clay or chalk, or a high pigment content. While making striking use of the medium's color saturation, Whitney also dilutes his paint to give the application a translucent luminosity more often associated with watercolor. The resultant works have a distinctive mottled surface and blushing tint that, as is the case with their oil-on-canvas counterparts, recalls Whitney's Roman inspiration through an active interplay of extemporaneity and design.

*Stanley Whitney: Dance with Me Henri*, an exhibition highlighting the stained-glass windows Whitney was commissioned to create for the Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies at the Baltimore Museum of Art, is on view through April 23, 2023.

**Stanley Whitney** was born in 1946 in Philadelphia, and lives and works in New York and Parma, Italy. Collections include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Solo exhibitions include *Recent Works*, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna, Rome (2004); Omi International Arts Center, Ghent, NY (2012); *Dance the Orange*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2015); *FOCUS*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX (2016); and *The Italian Paintings*, Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, Venice (2022). Whitney participated in Documenta 14 (Kassel, Germany; and Athens) in 2017.

#StanleyWhitney

## **STANLEY WHITNEY**

*Paintings on Paper*

Opening reception: Monday, December 19, 12–8pm

December 19, 2022–January 28, 2023

Promenade 79, Gstaad

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## **Press**

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