

Petzel

JAMES LITTLE

Conversations

May 5 – June 30, 2023

35 East 67th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *Conversations*, an exhibition of new paintings by New York-based artist James Little. The show marks Little's debut solo exhibition with the gallery and will be on view from May 5th to June 30th, 2023, at Petzel's parlor floor Upper East Side location at 35 East 67th Street. These abstract paintings continue the 40-year lineage of Little's practice, which celebrates the foundational elements that comprise his paintings: patterns, shapes, and the paint itself.

Little's masterful paintings are driven by a desire for simplicity and purity. Formal considerations of pictorial design, color, geometry, synthesis, and integration, along with his intimate relationship with the medium, are prioritized. "I ascribe to modernist tenets without replication or appropriation," he says. "Girded by experimentation, imagination, skill and deliberation, I strive for a pure and successful analytical painterly abstraction, unadorned and with precedent, although without agenda and not by fiat." Like an alchemist, Little creates his own pigments, which are carefully applied to each canvas and framed in meticulous grids utilizing labor-intensive, unconventional methods invented by the artist through years of experimentation. His distinctive visual position is based on a rigorous, life-long academic study of color theory and pictorial structure.

Little values the preservation of objects. He continuously finds inspiration in the remnants of canvas scraps from previous projects and creates a dialogue between his past and present by incorporating them into new works to serve as a "footprint to where the finished project was." His paintings speak to each other; the relationships between their formal characteristics impact the creation of future forms. The discussions that Little has with himself in the studio work their way into the process of shaping each painting with restrained control, while allowing the naturally occurring patterns to react. These conversations develop into self-made letters that ultimately culminate into analytical inquiries.

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About James Little

Little holds a BFA from the Memphis Academy of Art and an MFA from Syracuse University. He is a 2009 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award for Painting. In addition to being featured prominently in the 2022 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY, his work has been exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions around the world, including at MoMA P.S.1, New York, NY; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; and the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC. His work has been included in *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse* at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver and traveling to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR, with catalogue forthcoming. Recent solo exhibitions include *Homecoming: Bittersweet*, at Dixon Gallery & Gardens: Art Museum, Memphis, TN, with an accompanying catalogue; *Kavi Gupta*, Chicago, IL, in November 2022. In 2022, Little also participated in a historic collaboration for Duke Ellington's conceptual Sacred Concerts series with the New York Choral Society at the New School for Social Research and the Schomburg Center in New York, NY. His paintings are represented in the collections of numerous public and private collections, including the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; The Menil Collection in Houston; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Maatschappij Arti Et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Holland; Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton; Tennessee State Museum, Nashville; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock; Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey; and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, NY.

Petzel Gallery is located on the parlor floor and third floors of 35 East 67th Street New York, NY 10065. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.