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LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Cheyney Thompson *Intervals*

18 November 2023 – Spring 2024
4/F, Building D7, Yard No.3, Jinhang East Road, Beijing

Lisson Gallery presents the first solo exhibition on mainland China by the American artist, Cheyney Thompson. The show could be described as a meta survey of the last two decades of his rigorous and expansive practice – incorporating seven different ongoing bodies of work – although all the paintings have been produced in the past 12 months and scaled specifically to the proportions of the gallery. Rather than a chronological display method, Thompson has hung the works by series and aligned them horizontally, point to point across the space, with the dimensions of the final installation and each painting's size being determined by the room measurements, the door spans and any other spatial intrusions. Each work has also been formatted as a lozenge or diamond (neither portrait nor landscape, but a 45-degree rotation) to allow the paintings to touch one another and create a connective tissue that binds the paintings into one continuous stream of process, progress, proposition and production.

The seven series by Thompson are represented here by their collective titles and by a varying number of works: *Graphites* (four paintings), *Chronochromes* (seven paintings), *Bellonas* (two paintings), *Dead Landlords Through Subtracted Light* (two paintings), *Displacements* (nine paintings), *Stochastics* (six paintings) and *Caning* (five paintings; all dated 2023). As an artist, Thompson adheres to self-imposed instructions or restrictions for each body of work, perhaps relying on an algorithm or a mathematical formula to help determine the outcomes. For his new grouping of monochromes in graphite pigment, Thompson limits the volume of paint he can use, necessitating the application of an equal amount of material across each work until it runs out, allowing gesture and erasure to dictate the final works. The close-up checked patterns of *Dead Landlords Through Subtracted Light* reproduces a section of an earlier series that Thompson made in which he equates property rental values with the wages of artistic labour, while *Chronochromes* maps time spent making these paintings in 24-hour shifts or cycles, with the black areas representing midnight and the lighter marks for daylight hours.

The combinatorial and formally consistent installation nevertheless pulses and shifts register with each wall, also moving between abstraction and figuration, first in the *Caning* patterns that weave and glitch between the two states, and in the *Bellonas*, featuring sections of an Old Master painting of a goddess of war (Peter Paul Rubens's *Apotheosis of Henry IV*, 1625, from the Louvre), which are rendered into four-colour copies, mimicking the pre-digital CMYK printing process. Both the *Stochastic* and *Displacement* paintings are based on gridded surfaces that Thompson either disrupts with a giant silicone painting tool or colours in pathways according to a preordained, randomized code – suggesting the tensions between traditional notions of authorship or painterly risk and a newly automated, machinic imperative for art making.

While the title *Intervals* not only refers to the rhythms created by each painting in the space, it also points to some pervasive, persistent problems for Thompson as an artist, which are variously resolved or enacted through his own agency, despite any number of economic, material and historical pressures of the world being weighted against his every move.

About the artist

At the core of Cheyney Thompson's practice is an analytical approach and commitment to the examination of painting—its production, distribution and presentation in contemporary conditions. He often applies strict sets of principles to the creation of his work, using rules-based systems as generative tools to minimize the subjectivity of creative decisions. The methods for investigation have included such varied structures as mathematical theories, complex algorithms, economic formulas or numerical colour systems. The result is a dialogue between the formal qualities of the work and the consciousness of its production.

Cheyney Thompson was born in 1975 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and currently lives and works in New York. He received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1997. His work was recently included in 'Low Form. Imaginaries and Visions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence' at MAXXI, Rome, Italy (2019) and in 'Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965–2018' at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2019). Thompson's work was the subject of an exhibition with Sam Lewitt at The Brno House of Arts, Brno, Czechia (2017). Other solo exhibitions include 'Cheyney Thompson The Completed Reference: Pedestals and Drunken Walks', at Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (2012); and 'Cheyney Thompson: metric, pedestal, landlord, cabengo, recit', at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA, USA (2012). Select group exhibitions include 'Invisible Adversaries: Marieluise Hessel Collection', Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, USA (2016); 'Money, Good and Evil. A Visual History of Economics', Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden, Germany (2016); 'A Slow Succession with Many Interruptions', San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, USA (2016); 'Materials and Money and Crisis', Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria (2013); and the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2008), among others. Thompson's work is held in the permanent collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, USA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, 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 spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Beijing. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important 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 estate of Leon Polk Smith. 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 gone on to represent 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, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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