

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tony Lewis
Jot

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles
April 28–June 17, 2017
Opening reception: Friday, April 28, 6–8pm

Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Jot*, an exhibition of new colored pencil and graphite drawings by Chicago-based artist Tony Lewis. This marks Lewis' first exhibition with Blum & Poe, and his first solo presentation in Los Angeles.

In the artist's words, "*Jot* is an action, a singular idea, and phonetically akin to scat vocables used to build the structure of several drawings (i.e. 'bop,' 'doo-wee-oo-Mop,' 'Boyt-Loo Dee'). It's a handwritten record; a quick, brief, sound—but also sharp."

Here, densely colored shapes bisect, rest upon, and turn into one another, creating an elegant and formal interplay atop a ground of heavily worked graphite. Each drawing begins with a gesture based on a unit of sound, the foundation from which the artist builds a compositional rhythm and creates a sequence of improvisational delineations. The process reflects the artist's deep interest in the relationship between sound and gesture, notably the emotive onomatopoeic properties of scat singing. What emerges is a complete sketch with a defined sense of rhythm, tempo, and pitch.

By abbreviating the signature elements of written words and shorthand markings of past bodies of work, here Lewis endeavors to further his investigation of phonetics through the use of color and form. In this case, images and color fields act as support for or reactions to sound and language. The resulting compositions, which are driven by an improvisational and intuitive engagement with the chosen materials, reinforce Lewis' desire to attain a pure and unencumbered connection with sound, music, and language.

Tony Lewis was born in 1986 in Los Angeles, and lives and works in Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Alms Comity and Plunder*, Museo Marino Marini, Florence, Italy (2016); *nomenclature movement free pressure power weight*, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH (2015); and *48 • Keep a tight rein on your temper*, The Bindery Projects, Saint Paul, MN (2013). His work has been included in museum group exhibitions including: *The Revolution Will Not Be Gray*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2016); *Walls and Words*, Museum at Eldridge Street, New York, NY (2014); LUMP Projects, organized by John Neff, Raleigh, NC (2013); *People of Color*, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL (2012); and *Ground Floor*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL (2012). Tony Lewis participated the 2014 iteration of the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.