

LISSON GALLERY

LONDON

NEW YORK

27 Bell Street
NW1 5BU UK

504 West 24th Street
NY 10011 USA

67 Lisson Street
NW1 5DA UK

138 10th Avenue
NY 10011 USA

+44 (0)20 7724 2739

+1 212 505 6431

Press Release

Christopher Le Brun
'New Painting'

4 July – 18 August 2018
27 Bell Street, London
Opening: 3 July, 6 – 8pm

Christopher Le Brun's first exhibition with Lisson Gallery features a new series of abstractions created over the past two years, culminating in a number of large-scale paintings, some light in touch and some involving dense accretions of colour and gesture. These works represent a singularly rich moment in his 40-year career. Le Brun has been a celebrated British artist since the early 1980s; he has also been an instrumental public figure in his role since 2011 as President of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, which celebrates its 250th anniversary this year.

The glowing, scintillating surfaces of Le Brun's recent oil works on canvas – containing passages of pure painting that could be described as both luminous and numinous – are what he describes as “primary, non-ironic” responses to the act of painting, rather than self-reflexive commentaries on the process itself or homages to previous artists. There are, however, notable references to music and literature, including one composition entitled *Concert* (2017), which seems to bring many strands and motifs from his current bodies of work together as one, as if Le Brun was corralling every note from the orchestra towards a climactic, harmonic blast.

Poetic references are often found in the titles and works in this exhibition. For example, *The King's Highway* (2017) takes a line from Geoffrey Hill's poem, *The Jumping Boy* (2006) – “He is at home on the king's highway” – to describe Le Brun's commitment to his profession as a painter above all else. However, influences from Le Brun's drawing and printmaking practices also surface throughout this new work; especially in his decision to draw directly onto many of the surfaces with the paint tubes themselves or to move pigment around with a palette knife. This allows the tube nozzle or pointed blade to scarify the surface, performing a kind of *sgraffito* (scratching to reveal the layer below) or *intaglio* (cutting or engraving into an image), which invoke techniques derived from sculpture and printmaking.

Each line or touch is but one in a procession and continuum of nudges and additions, produced over many months, that reveal the full scope of Le Brun's experience and knowledge as an artist, perhaps recalling what the English writer Walter Pater wrote in 1869 on the work of Leonardo: “It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn and hours culled from a thousand with a miracle of *finesse*.”

This sensation of continuous change and layering contributes to certain works approaching an ‘all-over’ field of paint, one that hangs in the balance between union and chaos, despite being carefully poised, both spatially and tonally. Le Brun occasionally permits a sliver of an edge, horizon line or border to interrupt the tumultuous interior, with his keen sense of colour also contributing to the constant exchanges of movement, energy, warmth and light occurring throughout this radiant show.

About Christopher Le Brun

Christopher Le Brun is a painter, printmaker and sculptor based in London. Born in Portsmouth in 1951, he trained at the Slade and Chelsea Schools of Art, London. In his early career, he was a double prize winner at the John Moores exhibitions (1978, 1980), also showing in the Venice Biennale (1980) and the ground-breaking exhibition 'Zeitgeist' (1982) at the Martin-Gropius Bau, Berlin. His recent solo exhibitions include Albertz Benda New York, USA (2017); The Gallery at Windsor, Vero Beach, FL, USA (2017); Colnaghi, London, UK (2015); Friedman Benda, New York, USA (2014); New Art Centre, Wiltshire, UK (2010) and The New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK (2008).

Le Brun served as a trustee of Tate from 1990–1995, The National Gallery from 1996–2003, the Dulwich Picture Gallery from 2000–2005, and as a founding trustee of the Royal Drawing School from 2003–2016. He is currently a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery. He was elected the first Professor of Drawing of the Royal Academy, London in 2000, where since 2011 he has been the President, the 26th since Sir Joshua Reynolds and the youngest since Lord Leighton in 1878.

His work is in many major museum collections including Tate Gallery, London, UK; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; the British Museum, London, UK; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland; The Whitworth, Manchester, UK and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, USA. Le Brun's public sculptures include *Union (horse with two discs)* at the Museum of London, *City Wing* on the site of the former stock exchange at Threadneedle Street and *Wing Column - Monument to Victor Hugo* on the quayside in St Helier, Jersey. His work is the subject of a solo exhibition at Wolfson College, Cambridge ('Dualities' from April until August 2018) and 'Composer' at Southampton City Art Gallery, from September 2018 to January 2019.

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 develops 59 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Richard Long, before introducing a generation of significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including the Antonio Calderera Foundation, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost and Wael Shawky.

For press enquiries, please contact

Victoria Mitchell, Senior Media & Communications Manager
+44 (0)207 724 2739
victoria@lissongallery.com

i: [@lisson_gallery](#)
t: [@Lisson_Gallery](#)
fb: [LissonGallery](#)
www.lissongallery.com