

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JEFF ELROD



8 SEPTEMBER – 21 OCTOBER 2017

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER, 6 – 8 PM

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of new and recent paintings by New York and Marfa-based artist Jeff Elrod, his third with the gallery to date. Recognised for his large-format abstract paintings concerned with the relationship between hand-painted and digitally created mark-making, for this exhibition Elrod has created a series of hybrid images that incorporate analogue techniques into his continued experiments in digital and print technology.

The expansive and visually-engaging paintings presented across two floors navigate fluidly between the various modes and techniques that have come to characterise his practice. Since the early 1990s, Elrod has employed digital manipulation to create abstract art. Treating the computer mouse as an extension of the paint brush or pencil, his works are first developed digitally using programmes such as Illustrator and Photoshop. Perfecting his computer-based technique into what he calls “frictionless drawing”, blue monochromatic works on display demonstrate how these abstract and vector-like gestures are meticulously transposed onto canvas using acrylic, tape, UV ink and spray paint. In some paintings the letters ‘ESP’ - a recurring motif or tag in his work - float in and out of vision, referencing at once the subconscious doodles of the artist’s hand as well as a literal abbreviation of ‘Extra Sensory Perception’.

In other works, the above process is further complicated by the introduction of a layer of “stock” abstract imagery scavenged from the floor of his Marfa studio, which is then altered and embellished in Photoshop and by hand. In these paintings Elrod explores more complex and layered ways of generating the space of his paintings, with the boundaries between background and foreground becoming increasingly obscured. His recent paintings are often made by printing reworked digitised imagery directly onto canvas via inkjet printer. The ambiguity between screen and canvas is expressed through the juxtaposition of digital marks that convey the impression of a computer screen alongside more obvious signs of handmade techniques and gestures, such as sprayed paint.

In Elrod’s series of new *Echo Paintings*, “handedness” has disappeared from view: the images are generated and “blurred” digitally through the use of Photoshop filters, then printed and mounted. Inspired by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs’s self-hypnotising *Dream Machine*, Elrod’s paintings consist of indistinct blotches of two and three-tone colour spread across an expansive canvas. The space, shapes and lines from the artist’s original geometric computer drawings are lost and the indeterminate blur that is produced becomes the painting’s dominant aesthetic form. The blur has a long presence within the history of art, from the hazy compositions of Impressionist landscapes, to the elusive techniques employed by Gerhard Richter across his photorealist and

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abstract painting practice. Elrod's blurs however, remain pure abstractions and deliver a very different and unique optical experience for the viewer. The monumental and dizzying results on display seem to float and hover off the wall, while their pronounced retinal effect frustrates the eye's inclination to focus.

In these recent paintings, the clash between analogue and digital production is further enhanced through continued experiments with shaped and fractured canvases. The virtual and real space collides with the inclusion of jarring fractured shards that punctuate the surface of the canvas, and interrupt the illusory space of the screen. While formally reminiscent of Lucio Fontana's iconic *Tagli*, by contrast Elrod's clean and organic geometric subtractions offer little evidence of man's actions or gestures. At a time when the slippages between our own real and virtual lives are increasingly blurred, Elrod's unique practice seems all the more relevant and familiar.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Jeff Elrod was born in Dallas, TX in 1966 and lives and works between Marfa, TX and Brooklyn, NY. He received his BFA from University of Texas, Denton, TX in 1991. He has participated in residency fellowships at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX (1998); the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (1993) and the Core Fellowship at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX (1991). Important solo museum exhibitions include *Jeff Elrod: Nobody Sees Like Us*, MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (2013) and *FOCUS: Jeff Elrod*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX (2009). His paintings are included in many prominent public and private collections including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. He is a recipient of both the Louis Comfort Tiffany award (1997) and the Claire Hart De Goyer Award bestowed by the Dallas Museum of Art (1992).

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