

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JEFF ELROD

6 FEBRUARY- 7 MARCH 2015.

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2015, 6-8PM

Simon Lee Gallery is proud to present for the first time in Asia, an exhibition of new works by Texas and New York-based artist, Jeff Elrod (b. 1966). Elrod's new body of large-scale paintings are investigations of composition, form and texture informed by the history of abstract painting, perceptual experiments and the evolution of digital technology. Employing both digital and manual processes in the different stages of his work, Elrod's practice explores the currency of twentieth century abstract expressionism in the context of a computer dominated, digital culture characterised by our engagement with the screen and its illusory space.

Elrod's graphic paintings originate from preliminary drawings drafted on computer software programs, using the mouse to produce rapidly executed variations on improvised themes that may riff on old school punk songs, genetic engineering, Extra Sensory Perception or Matisse. This imagery is then rendered on canvas, often by hand, using various techniques with acrylic paint, tape, spray paint and UV ink. As though grafting a computer aesthetic onto a modernist painting, his works are hybrids of digital technology and the labour intensive process of hard-edge painting, combining what he terms 'analogue' techniques with clean, cool computer-derived lines and forms. In a direct reference to digital elements, the shaped canvases are articulations of different windows of a computer or layers of a file. Working with a mouse instead of a pencil liberates Elrod to draw freely and smoothly without friction. As a tool it allows for a spontaneity, speed and uninhibited openness that could be compared to Surrealist automatic drawing. These free-style, smooth, vector-based motifs of angular scribbles, slicing zig zags, looping lines, biomorphic shapes and colour fields are then exactly transferred onto large scale canvas with paint and tape as well as digital printing.

In Elrod's paintings a sense of foreground and background is difficult to discern. By utilizing negative space and alternating between a sense of representing a discrete object or a cutaway section of the ground, he re-examines formal ideas of figure and ground relationships and the image shifts between flat areas of modern colour and illusory depth. Woven space, fractured planes appear and then disappear, answerable only to the rules of their own eccentric geometry. Other works evoke hallucinatory effects, in a reverse process of hard-edged drawings dissolved into blurred clouds of colour that are impossible to focus. The images challenge the notion of how to make a line or create a new posture for flattened space or abstract composition, swivelling from geometry to gesture, propelling representation and language into abstraction, exploring pictorial edges and boundaries as well as the constitutive or disruptive role of blank space. Elrod's work exists in a dichotomy of being deliberately clean of idiosyncrasies created by application of paint by hand, while also eliciting an expressiveness that belies its technological roots.

Jeff Elrod (b. 1966) lives and works between Marfa, Texas and Brooklyn, New York. He has participated in residency fellowships at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa (1998) and the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (1993). Major solo exhibitions include *Nobody Sees Like Us* at MoMA P.S. 1 in Long Island City, New York (2013) and *Focus: Jeff Elrod* at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas (2009). His paintings are in many prominent public and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Progressive Corporation, Mayfield, Ohio and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Collection, Washington D.C.

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