

JOHN BERGGRUEN GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULIAN LETHBRIDGE

November 7 – December 14, 2013

John Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by American artist Julian Lethbridge. *New Paintings* marks the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery, and will be on view November 7 – December 14th, 2013. John Berggruen Gallery will host an opening reception for the artist on Thursday, November 7th from 5:30 – 7:30 pm.

Julian Lethbridge continues his exploration of the rhythmic surfaces and optical depths of abstract painting. Beginning with seductive, luminous oil paints and pigment sticks, Lethbridge builds his compositions layer upon layer in an additive process that results in richly textured, complex images. Often a grooved grid or all-over textured paper provides the grounding layer, offering a stabilizing principle of organization over which the artist's improvisational gestures take form. On top of his foundation, Lethbridge constructs undulating forms that may recall natural phenomena like a wave tumbling particles in a low tide or the rustle of wind.

Julian Lethbridge uses multiple, partially obscured layers of paint to create works of complex and disorienting spatial depth. The paintings have a methodical precision that works through, rather than against, the looseness of the artist's hand. In a new series made for this exhibition, the dimensions of some of the frames reference the proportions of the human body. Six-foot-tall canvases physically engage the viewer. Upon close inspection, their seemingly random "all over" compositions reveal the trace of a highly choreographed movement of brushstrokes across the canvas.

These new works are a continuation of a process the artist has employed since the mid-1980s, using colored grounds on which rhythmic brushstrokes are overlaid. The grounds, spare underpaintings done in monochrome or with a limited palette, are carved to create burrs and ridges along their surface. These ridges provide an internal, closed structure upon which the highly worked webbing of the surface painting rests.

Born in Sri Lanka and brought up primarily in England, Julian Lethbridge received his education at Winchester College and Cambridge University. His work has been widely exhibited throughout the United States and Europe and can be found in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), The Tate Gallery (London), The Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago), and The National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.). In 1988, Julian

Lethbridge was awarded the Francis J. Greenberger Award. He lives and works in New York.