

Julia Rommel
Uncle
January 29 - March 5 2022

Bureau is pleased to announce *Uncle*, Julia Rommel's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery.

There is a structural, pragmatic quality to Rommel's paintings. We see how they are built, layered, rubbed, smoothed, folded, unfolded and stapled together. The traces of manipulation are not hidden, rather they are laid bare with frayed edges and revealed wooden stretcher bars. The new paintings for *Uncle* are no longer the expression of fitful, repetitive re-workings. They are spry attempts at balance and harmony just this side of chaos.

Rommel begins, like many painters, by coating linen with repeating layers of gesso, a chalky primer. She plans out these expanses of thick, white underpainting – and those areas without – to create an architectural pattern upon which a painting of varying thickness and texture will result. These paintings show recent experiments with opacity and brush work, some exhibiting a thinner wash with a new focus on translucence. Hazy monochromes of green and crimson are punctuated by scratchy and icing-thick fields of color. Crisp, vertical stripes of white, red, pink and blue bisect the compositions and triangular creases appear throughout - a trace of the paintings' process. At times, the linen barely reaches the perimeter of the composition to roll over the stretcher with staples methodically holding a thin edge in place. In other works, staples are deployed like sutures to join two sheets of thickly laid pigment: a wound creating a shallow, jagged valley across the picture.

The installation, deliberate and precise, is the result of a desire to engage with Bureau's gallery space in a new way. The exhibition features many smaller and medium sized paintings allowing the works to engage one another in shifting scale and clarity. The small paintings in gemlike purples and greens re-introduce the intimate scale of Rommel's earliest work bringing into focus her original technique of stretching and re-stretching. Many of the smaller paintings could be called siblings with their larger neighbors; cut from the same cloth and sliced apart by the artist in a decisive move.

The exhibition is the result of a year's worth of trials and innovations, as any active studio practice is: the artist attempts at moving beyond the repetition and duplication of her own developed systems and techniques. Rommel has often talked about creating the element of chance, but then knowing her technique so well, she has to change it to surprise herself. With this show that challenge becomes ever more complex. She revels in the abundant possibilities for how to prepare linen to receive color and how to build form. Rommel shows that there are always new ways to start and finish paintings.

Julia Rommel (b. 1980 in Salisbury MD, lives and works in New York) received an MFA from American University in Washington D.C. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Long Leash*, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles, 2020; *Fall Guy*, Standard (Oslo), Oslo, 2019; *Candy Jail*, Bureau, New York, 2019; *Twin Bed*, Bureau at Tanya Leighton, Berlin, 2018; *Stay-at-Home Dad* with Mathew Cerletty, Standard (Oslo), Oslo, 2017; *Two Italians, Six Lifeguards*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, 2015. Rommel's work is currently on view in *Christen Sveaas Art Foundation: The Travel Bureau*, selected by Paulina Olowaska, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2022. Her work is in the collections of the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; KADIST, Paris and San Francisco; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway; Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

front gallery



New Grip, 2022
Oil on linen
26 × 52 in.



Roller, 2021
Oil on linen
48 ½ × 24 in.

main gallery



Purp, 2021
Oil on linen
25 ¼ × 13 ¾ in.



China Chalet, 2021
Oil on linen
48 × 38 in.



Left Field, 2021
Oil on linen
37 ½ × 66 ¼ in.



Life Boat, 2021
Oil on linen on wood
69 ¾ × 83 in.



Forgiveness, 2021
Oil on linen
25 ¼ × 25 ½ in.



Red Nude, 2021
Oil on linen
61 × 44 ½ in.



Go Fish, 2021
Oil on linen
14 ½ × 12 ¾ in.



15th Floor, 2022
Oil on linen
48 ½ × 42 in.