

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jonathan Lasker

*The Life of Objects in a Picture*

May 5 – June 17, 2023

Ground Floor

Over five decades, Jonathan Lasker has pursued what he calls “a poetic subversion of systemic abstraction.” His second solo show at Greene Naftali features new paintings alongside a survey of drawings made over the past fifteen years. The exhibition invests shape and form with a wryly pleasurable, near-animistic quality—affirming, as a new work’s title attests, the life of objects in a picture.

Lasker’s latest paintings are built from saturated zones of tactile color: bright, sherbet-y hues that accrue in raised blocks smoothed with a palette knife, interlocking like tectonic plates to form the picture plane. These tracts of paint appear to sit atop mottled fields of two-tone brushwork, a lighter shade applied in feathery strokes over an expanse of underpainting. Staging a set of relational dramas between component parts, the new works extend his career-long project to reclaim symbolic content for abstraction. An ash-gray mass forms an additional layer in the paintings’ varied topography; it hovers in each behind the veil of thinned paint, eluding clear distinctions between figure and ground. Lasker has said he embeds such “deep space clues” to defy the pretense of painterly flatness, implying spatial recession to frame “a situation in which pictorial events can be inferred.” The artist welcomes the figurative associations that trail his impastoed shapes: some objective (squares, rectangles), but many of his own invention that cannot be named without appeals to metaphor (cartoon heads, anvils, puzzle pieces, mushroom clouds). His evocative titles further encourage this kind of loose anthropomorphism, and Lasker’s work proves fertile ground for projections of all kinds—for him, paint on canvas is a model for thought.

The exhibition will also feature a focused selection of Lasker’s rarely exhibited works on paper—drawings that form a distinctive enterprise that parallels his painting practice. These large sheets have long served as proving grounds for new compositional schemes, and as a means of posing his fundamental formal questions in truly two-dimensional terms. Rendered in graphite and colored pencil, the drawings engage the endless permutational possibilities of line. Many are overlaid with dark swaths of India ink that redact the marks below; another way of exploring the figure/ground oppositions so central to his thinking. Lasker refers to the most densely patterned works as “picture-within-a-picture drawings,” comprised of a rectangular, cage-like structure filled with colored scribbles and cursive loops. Those same signature elements are then flung to the edges, surrounding the interior portion like an index or tally of what’s inside. Tightly engineered but lighthearted in mood, each drawing on view has a graphic snap that can set the whole surface quivering—lines coiled with potential energy, as if poised to get up and move.

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Jonathan Lasker (b. 1948) lives and works in New York. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Greene Naftali, New York (2021), and at institutions including the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, among others. His work is held in numerous public collections, including the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo; Centre Pompidou, Paris; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, Florida; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

# GREENE NAFTALI

Jonathan Lasker: *The Life of Objects in a Picture*

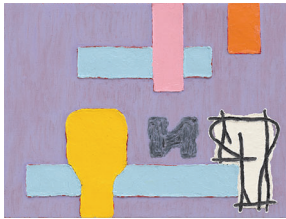
May 5 – June 17, 2023

Ground Floor

Front Gallery:



*Landscape with Crucifix, Holy Ghost and Alpine Quadrant, 2022*  
Oil on linen  
12 x 16 inches (30.5 x 40.6 cm)



*Depth of Field, 2020*  
Oil on linen  
12 x 16 inches (30.5 x 40.6 cm)



*The Life of Objects in a Picture, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)

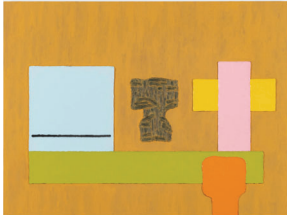
Main Gallery, clockwise:



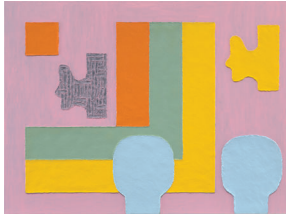
*One Became Outstanding, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)



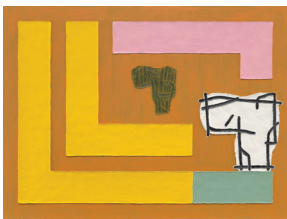
*Superior Domesticity, 2022*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)



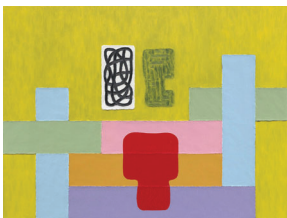
*The Location Between Being and Nothingness, 2022*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)



*Inappropriate Euphoria, 2021*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)



*Social Cubism, 2021*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)

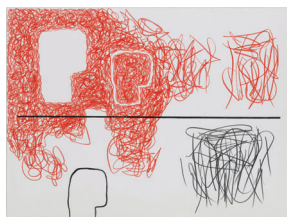


*Souls Seeking Gods, 2019*  
Oil on linen  
60 x 80 inches (152.4 x 203.2 cm)

Rear Gallery, clockwise:



*Untitled, 2010*  
Graphite and india ink on paper  
Paper: 30 x 22 3/8 inches (76.2 x 56.8 cm)  
Frame: 34 3/4 x 27 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches (88.3 x 68.9 x 3.8 cm)



*Untitled, 2010*  
Graphite and colored pencil on paper  
Paper: 22 3/8 x 30 inches (56.8 x 76.2 cm)  
Frame: 27 1/8 x 34 3/4 x 1 1/2 inches (68.9 x 88.3 x 3.8 cm)



*Untitled, 2009*

Graphite, colored pencil, and india ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 3/8 inches (76.2 x 56.8 cm)

Frame: 34 3/4 x 27 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches (88.3 x 68.9 x 3.8 cm)



*Untitled, 2013*

Graphite, colored pencil, and india ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 3/8 inches (76.2 x 56.8 cm)

Frame: 34 3/4 x 27 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches (88.3 x 68.9 x 3.8 cm)

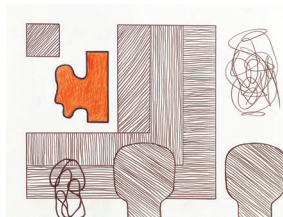


*Untitled, 2013*

Graphite, colored pencil, and india ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 3/8 inches (76.2 x 56.8 cm)

Frame: 34 3/4 x 27 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches (88.3 x 68.9 x 3.8 cm)

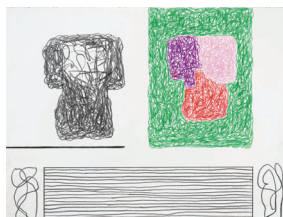


*Untitled, 2018*

Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Paper: 22 3/8 x 30 inches (56.8 x 76.2 cm)

Frame: 27 1/8 x 34 3/4 x 1 1/2 inches (68.9 x 88.3 x 3.8 cm)



*Untitled, 2021*

Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Paper: 22 3/8 x 30 inches (56.8 x 76.2 cm)

Frame: 27 1/8 x 34 3/4 x 1 1/2 inches (68.9 x 88.3 x 3.8 cm)