

James Cohan will present *Open Alphabet*, an exhibition of new work by Federico Herrero, at the gallery's Chelsea location from Thursday, October 25 through Friday, December 21. *Open Alphabet* is Herrero's first solo exhibition at James Cohan. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist on October 25 from 6-8 pm.

Federico Herrero investigates the ways in which color shapes our lived environment, understanding painting as an extension of landscape. In his works, which range from small canvases to immersive installations and monumental public murals, primordial planes of vivid color shift and settle into irregular shapes. Herrero views painting, at any scale, as a process that is continuously evolving and never complete. His paintings often transcend the confines of the canvas or the vertical wall and extend to the horizontal planes of the floor, ceiling, windows and beyond—into public spaces and urban life—responding on ever greater scales to the shifting politics of site. His distinctive visual language is rooted in his observations of everyday life—both in his native Costa Rica and abroad—and of the ways in which nature and urban development negotiate for space and presence. Informed as much by the tradition of color-field abstraction as by the surreal landscapes of Roberto Matta, Hélio Oiticica's Tropicalia, graffiti and urban signage, Herrero creates exuberantly-colored installations and paintings that activate the environments they exist within.

For *Open Alphabet*, Herrero will present a series of new paintings on canvas. The loosely-geometric shapes that populate Herrero's work have, in recent years, become larger and less graphically suggestive. This distillation of his formal vocabulary enables Herrero to explore the sensory properties of place through the consideration of sound, weight, and energy of color. As Herrero notes, "Pigments are jumping from place to place within my paintings. I connect this with how I perceive public space. I see painting jumping from place to place there as well. The continuum of paint and signs in public space shapes our perception, so I am always looking where painting is happening."

Federico Herrero (b. 1978, San Jose, Costa Rica) has exhibited widely internationally, with solo exhibitions and public installations in São Paulo, Brazil; San Francisco, CA; Dusseldorf, Germany; Kanazawa, Japan; Tokyo, Japan; Mexico City, Mexico; Freiburg, Germany; and London, UK. Current museum commissions include *Open Envelope* at the Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands and *Alphabet*, a site-specific installation for the atrium of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL. Herrero was the recipient of the Young Artist's Prize at the 49th Venice Biennale (2001) and his work is in the permanent collection of numerous institutions including the Tate Modern, London, UK; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY. Herrero is also the founder of *Despacio*, a contemporary art

space in his native San Jose, which is an important force in the continued development of Central America's artistic voice. He lives and works in San Jose, Costa Rica.

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