



Art

11 Emerging Artists Redefining Abstract Painting

Alina Cohen Jan 6, 2020 1:00pm

The divide between abstraction and figuration is a false, but helpful, dichotomy. Painters who are primarily concerned with the interactions between color, line, and form also make marks and shapes that may suggest body parts, landscapes, and objects traditionally relegated to still lifes. Even monochrome paintings can conjure familiar settings: A gray canvas might evoke a rock face, while a blue one may suggest the sea.

This principle can go the other way, as well. “I would consider myself a figurative painter fundamentally,” artist Louise Giovanelli told me, “but I certainly have a loose idea of figuration—anything that suggests a form, even if this suggestion is faint.”

A new generation of painters, all 40 years old or younger, are rethinking what we might call, for lack of a better term, abstraction. For them, labels aren't important. They're more interested in the infinite ways paint can be applied to develop suggestive, beguiling, and transcendent compositions. They explore what it means to make a painting in the digital age and use contemporary research to generate new patterns and designs. Despite the diversity of these artists' practices, a near-mystical devotion to the act of making and a desire to communicate via symbols and hues unites them all.

Jason Stopa

B. 1983, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Lives and works in New York.



Jason Stopa, *Interior Pleasures*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

Jason Stopa makes paintings-within-paintings that suggest multiple browsers open on the same desktop. A red background lined with yellow stripes and diamonds, for example, might feature two distinct foregrounds on two vertically oriented rectangles of the same size that contain more color and pattern. Such compositions complicate ideas of foreground and background; of surface and support.

Stopa said he ultimately believes that first and foremost, painting is “about color as light and light as space.” He’s interested in rethinking painterly space and connecting his ideas to the virtual, domestic, public, and interior worlds that he and his viewers occupy. The entire divide between abstraction and figuration seems retrograde to him, “a 20th-century problem.” He considers non-objective art impossible: The brain is wired to make connections between aesthetic elements, such as color and line, and ideas beyond the canvas.