

The New Criterion

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Weekly recommendations from the editors of *The New Criterion* on what to read, see, and hear in the world of culture.



Jason Stopa, Joy Labyrinth, 2020, Oil on canvas, Morgan Lehman.

June 1, 2021

**On Jason Stopa, Gustav Mahler,
Alexei Ratmansky & more.**

Art



Jason Stopa, Primary Cathedral, 2021, Oil on canvas, Morgan Lehman.

“Jason Stopa: Joy Labyrinth,” at Morgan Lehman (through June 19): Jason Stopa’s playful abstract paintings make unbuttoned allusions to lattice fencing, heraldic shields, musical notation, and exponential functions, among other visual sources. Loosely brushed in high-keyed yet specific and seemingly carefully chosen hues, the paintings sit in conversation with the work of artists like **Stanley Whitney** and Marina Adams, though Stopa tends, more than those two, towards idiosyncratic gestures that disrupt the unity of his pictures. Also like Whitney, Stopa readily acknowledges the formal modernist grid (an inevitable consequence of any rectangular canvas), but does so with a sense of mirth and pleasure and fun. He is now showing new works at Morgan Lehman, in his first exhibition with the gallery. **—AS**