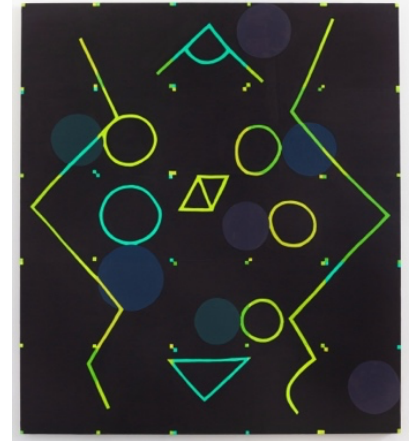


## Jason Karolak *POROUS*

April 7 – May 21, 2022



Morgan Lehman Gallery is pleased to present *POROUS*, an exhibition of new paintings by Jason Karolak. This marks the artist's first exhibition with the gallery.

The body of work represented here is the result of three years of focused studio investigation, which took place during quarantine and over the course of the pandemic in general. Throughout this tumultuous time, Karolak was able to deepen and clarify his practice, the paintings becoming more spatially and structurally complex as a result.

The artist's process has always included an expanded drawing practice. This practice employs photography, projection, and printing, in addition to the use of more traditional drawing implements such as graphite and ink on paper. Each painting is grounded in an image-form that becomes a sort of pictorial anchor that Karolak distills or even morphs into something completely different. These initial image-forms come from a range of sources both autobiographical or based in the artist's research: personal sites/locations, utopian architecture, musical structures, art-historical references, video games, and even recycled elements from earlier works. Recently, Karolak has found himself injecting more information into the drawing-plans he creates for each painting, staying with each image-form for longer, reworking and essentializing it into multiple iterations.

As the formal language of Karolak's paintings has become more crystallized in certain ways, one notices that there's also a sense of the ephemeral or fragmented in each piece. The artist is interested in fashioning "floating structures" that are almost permeable to air or other materials passing through, flickering on and off. The visual spaces in the paintings often register as digital, evoking the illuminated darkness of screens or other virtual spheres, and conjuring an alt-world of sorts for the viewer. Zooming out, Karolak's drawing procedure might be thought of as way to code the decisions about color in the corresponding painting, with each work following a system to place and structure the chromatic elements.

Though procedural in their making and visually referential to the virtual, Karolak's paintings are always insistently material and hand-made. Hard geometries are processed and softened through the artist's hand. Dark, velvety grounds make one think of spiritual-tinged color environments of high Modernist canvases, while punchy, bright impasto passages invoke the sly wit of Pop and its abstract painting descendants. By going deeper and pushing the limits of his own abstract language, Karolak creates something idiosyncratic and potent.

**Jason Karolak** (b. 1974, Rochester, MI) earned a BFA from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Recent solo exhibitions include The Boulder Museum of Art, Boulder, CO; David Shelton Gallery, Houston, TX; and Grölle Pass Projects, Wuppertal, Germany. Karolak has participated in numerous group exhibitions at venues such as Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL; The Landing Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; and Museum Wilhelm Morgner, Soest, Germany. His work has been reviewed in *Hyperallergic*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, and *The New York Times*. Karolak lives in Brooklyn, NY and works in Long Island City, NY.