

Austin Thomas *City Scape*

September 5 – October 7, 2023



Morgan Lehman is proud to announce, “City Scape”, the first New York solo show by Austin Thomas in over five years. This exhibition showcases Thomas's distinct abstract works — vivid works on paper and paintings brought to life with inked steel stencils and foam shapes, harmonizing chaos through the use of basic geometric figures.

Through her art, the artist navigates city life, capturing architectural geometries and the contagious energy of urban spontaneity. References to soaring skylines and vertiginous views collide to form a maze of shapes and angles that reflect the artist's unique perspective of metropolitan experience. Her work celebrates the city with a palette of sunny yellows, sky blues, brick browns, and sidewalk-gray hues. The bold markings and eccentric shapes, guided by formal improvisation, reveal multilayered meanings and invite joyful puzzling. For the viewer, looking at her works is akin to traversing the bustling streets of Manhattan. Thomas invites audiences to react freely to and engage with these abstract urban narratives. Through her process-driven approach, ordinary urban experiences morph into extraordinary aesthetic spectacles.

Thomas meticulously layers ink colors on found paper using sheet metal templates, foam, and an etching press. Her idiosyncratic printing method allows the artist to periodically pause the process of making and conduct an in-depth analysis of each work to strategize subsequent layers, colors, and shapes. Intuition meets a studied intentionality, one impulse informing the other, back and forth. The colorful results blend abstract utilitarian forms and urban-architectural visual nuances through the artist's distinctive language of geometric abstraction.

Thomas is a community-minded practitioner with a rich history in the New York scene. Her artistic sensibility underscores a "being there" ethos, acknowledging the mutable, intricate, and multiple facets of urban life, as well as the importance of productive dialogue between everyone involved in aesthetic exchange. In looking at Thomas's paintings and works on paper, we delight in the chaotic harmony of the city, and the people who live here.

Austin Thomas lives and works in New York and earned her Masters at NYU. She has received numerous residencies and fellowships, including Wave Hill, Guttenberg Arts, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, Smack Mellon, LMCC, and a Bascom Lodge, Mount Greylock Summer Residency. Thomas's work has been shown nationally and internationally and reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Art in America*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Paris Review*, and *Hyperallergic*. She has recently had solo exhibitions at Municipal Bonds in San Francisco, CA, and at LABSpace in Hillsdale, NY. Thomas's work is held in numerous permanent collections, including Grinnell College, The Corcoran Legacy Collection, Hoggard Wagner Collection, and New York Presbyterian Hospital. Her work is also featured in the book, “Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists”, and in its sequel, “The Artist as Culture Producer: Living and Sustaining a Creative Life”, both edited by Sharon Loudon. This is Thomas's second solo exhibition with Morgan Lehman.