

Audrey Stone *Together and Apart*

November 16, 2023 – January 6, 2024



Morgan Lehman is pleased to announce the opening of “Together and Apart,” an exhibition of new paintings by Audrey Stone. This marks the artist’s third solo exhibition with the gallery.

The works on display are decidedly abstract in their pictorial content, yet conceptually rich and rooted in ideas both personal and universal. At the forefront of Stone’s recent conceptual interests is the notion of reflection or mirroring. The artist has been taking stock of her studio practice, looking backward at past bodies of work and the shape of her creative trajectory to move forward as a painter. This very vulnerable act of looking into the proverbial mirror gave rise to a group of new paintings that possess a quiet knowing and self-awareness. They illustrate an evolution in Stone’s practice while highlighting the artist’s time-honored strengths as a colorist and arranger of image space.

The most noticeable change is a shift from Stone’s established single-panel painting format to an embrace of diptychs and multi-panel works, which physicalize the mirror concept. The artist determines the orientation of the diptychs in advance, but makes room for the element of chance when working on the multi-panel paintings. She explains: “I make the four-panel pieces without any set expectation of the final composition, allowing me to take a leap of faith that the work will arrive at an orientation that feels right, while also accepting that perhaps the puzzle has more than one ‘right’ solution.” Stone pushes this open-endedness further by polling her peers on social media and inviting them to engage in a sort of virtual group studio visit. This dialogue helps the artist arrive at and understand the reasons behind her compositional decisions, and has the added benefit of breaking up the isolation of painting solo in the studio.

In creating her signature color gradients, Stone is always thinking about visual pacing and rhythm. This is similar to how a composer might craft a melodic progression of individual notes; her experience of calibrating these color moments is sensorial and bodily. The artist has traditionally relied on taping to achieve crisp edges in her work, but prefers to think of herself as a “soft-edge” painter, allowing some bleed to take place between color bands that helps the hues breathe and intermingle. The latest paintings feature un-taped, hand-brushed edges, a new type of painting move for Stone that plays against the tighter taped zones. The effect is a gentler and perhaps more atmospheric formal sensibility that proposes a new direction for the work while questioning painters’ sometimes curious embrace of certain studio tools while rejecting others.

The paintings on display embody Stone’s self-reflective energies but also consider the relationship between the self and the community. Painting is a solitary activity and yet artists often yearn to connect with other people through their work. For Stone, the definition of community goes beyond a group of artist peers and art world professionals to encompass a larger idea of collectivity: where are we going as a society? In many ways, these paintings reflect a sense of being both alone and a part of the community. They are the result of Stone’s meditations on the fluidity, overlap, and contradictions of these entities, proposing tough questions without easy answers.

Audrey Stone received her MFA from Hunter College and her BFA from Pratt Institute, both in painting. She studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and was selected for the Artist in The Marketplace program at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Her work has been exhibited across the United States, as well as in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, England, France and Japan. Recent solo exhibitions include a 2021 show at Kenise Barnes Fine Art in Kent, CT, and a 2020 solo exhibition, “By Fire,” at Morgan Lehman Gallery. Stone has shown in group exhibitions at the Andy Warhol Museum, the Arkansas Art Center, The Columbus Museum, the Flinn Gallery, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Kentler International Drawing Space, McKenzie Fine Art, ODETTA Gallery, and Winston Wachter Seattle. In 2023, Stone became a member of the American Abstract Artists, a historic artist-run organization, and attended the Surf Point Foundation artist residency. Her work is in the collections of the Amateras Foundation, Charles Schwab Print Program, Cleveland Clinic, Credit Suisse, Fidelity Investments, and New York Presbyterian Hospital, amongst others. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.