

JOHN LOKER

SPACE IS A DANGEROUS COUNTRY

13 January - 6 February, 2016

Private View: Tuesday 12 January, 6-8pm

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new large-scale paintings by John Loker.

Since his first solo exhibition at the gallery in 1970, Loker has continued to develop a personal language of painterly abstraction through experimentation with new working processes. Loker's manipulation of the substance and surface of his paintings and development of recurring motifs contributes to an evolving vocabulary, formulated to describe the infinite and ephemeral nature of experience, and the shifting balance of oppositional forces.

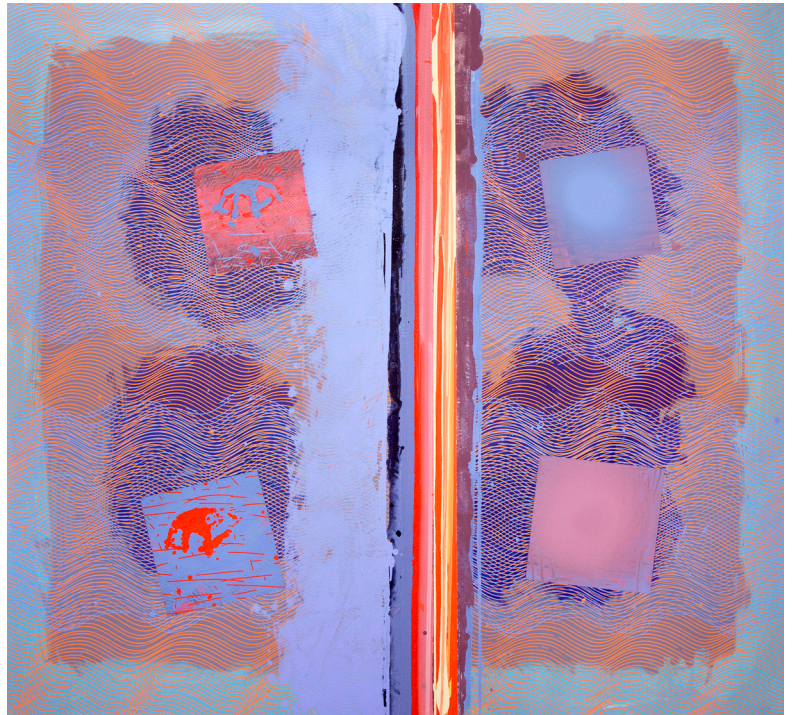
In recent paintings, networks of interwoven lines provide a principle formal structure or mesh, from which rhythmic undulations and topological contours emerge to suggest space and scale. Surface splatters and blurred areas of diffused paint evoke nebulous atmospheres, and introduce chaos to the underlying order.

This is one of a series of oppositional strategies, establishing a level of uncertainty and vulnerability through the potential obliteration of the precise painted surface. Breaks within the mesh disrupt the rhythm, introducing the surface flicker of moiré patterns and glimpses of coiled oval shapes. Colour is also presented as a series of binary oppositions, shifting between reds and blues, and dark and light tones. The canvas is further activated by the addition of inner squares containing gestural shapes, which Loker describes as focusing on a "world within a world, or a space within a space".

Loke has introduced images to his paintings since the 1980s, using motifs such as pylons, warheads, whale's tails and windshield wipers. These forms, which become abstracted or distilled, take on new resonance and meaning over time, and yet relate each painting to a direct experience. In this latest series, the recurring central shape derives from NASA imagery of the disintegration of the Columbia Spacecraft of 2003. The essence of 'breaking apart' is explored in metaphorical as well as literal terms, and is achieved through the manipulation of the paint itself rather than through figurative imitation.

Loke's paintings are created horizontally, laid flat on the floor of the studio while he works on planks suspended over their surface. Several of the new works, including *Fade Out*, *Violence Afoot*, and *Worlds Divide* are bisected by a vertical channel of poured paint. This physical change of orientation marks a shift of energy within the painting, contrasting the gravitational pull of the mass of poured substance with the seemingly weightless space beyond.

Loke has said: "The pours bring a divide, or a definition between something incredibly active, with something passive behind it... splitting the canvas in two between violence and emptiness."



Space is a Dangerous Country - Worlds Divide I, 2014, Oil on canvas
160 x 175 cm, 63 x 68 7/8 in

About The Artist:

John Loker has exhibited with Flowers Gallery for over four decades. Born in Leeds, Loker now lives and works in East Anglia. He studied Graphic Design at Bradford College of Art and Design alongside fellow artists David Hockney, Norman Stevens and David Oxtoby from 1954-58; and went on to study Painting at the Royal College from 1960-63. He has exhibited widely internationally, and his work is in the collections of the Arts Council of Great Britain; British Council; Deutsche Bank AG, London; De Beers; Hunterian Collection, Glasgow; Power Institute of Fine Art, Sydney; Tate Gallery; and Victoria and Albert Museum. A solo exhibition is being planned for 2018 at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford Museums.

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - Hannah@flowersgallery.com / 0207 920 7777.



Space is a Dangerous Country - Re-entry, 2014

Oil on canvas

160 x 175 cm, 63 x 68 7/8 in

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