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For Immediate Release:

Pat Lipsky: Color World

Eric Firestone Gallery

4 Great Jones Street, Third Floor | New York, NY

November 3 – December 22, 2023

Opening Reception: Friday, November 3, 6:00–8:00PM

Eric Firestone Gallery is pleased to announce the gallery's first solo exhibition of Pat Lipsky's work. Pat Lipsky: Color World will focus on her Wave paintings, made between 1969–1975, along with recent paintings responding to the historic work. Lipsky (b. 1941) recently reflected, "Much of my life as a painter has been spent searching for colors which will work together to create what Hans Hofmann called 'a color world.'"

Lipsky's Wave paintings are exuberant, vivid, and fresh. They are, by necessity, painted in one shot: acrylic on unprimed canvas, with color bands in loose wave formations which dissolve into drips and splatters at the edges. The images do not extend to the canvas' perimeter but rather float in empty space.



Pat Lipsky | *Lavender Field* | 2023
acrylic on canvas
56 1/2h x 74 3/4w in

The exhibition represents a unique opportunity to reflect on Lipsky's significant contribution to the modes of Color Field Painting, and her highly successful exhibitions at André Emmerich Gallery between 1970–1975. Yet it also explores the full circle of an artist today making new work in conversation with a high point of her past.

Lipsky has reflected on this exhilarating period of time, 1969–1971:

I got a studio on 11th Street. I loved going down there. I would stop at Chock Full o'Nuts and get two coffees to go. The paintings from the night before would be lying on the floor. I'd climb on top of the ladder and look down at them. I remember the smell and the feel of the canvas. I have never been happier. I'd see how the paintings looked, whether I'd been on or off the day before. Then I'd hang them up on the wall, and see how they looked up. Then I'd tack some new canvas onto the floor and start working. The canvas would be blank, just like

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Pat Lipsky in the studio, Hoosick Falls, NY, 1971

a big piece of white paper on the floor. I'd sponge the whole thing down with water. Then I'd start pouring color onto the canvas. I had these wonderful silk cosmetic sponges of different sizes that I'd collected. I'd dance, I'd play, I'd rub.

Lipsky was born and raised in New York City, receiving her B.F.A. from Cornell University and her M.F.A. from Hunter College. At Hunter, she found a mentor in the sculptor Tony Smith. He encouraged Lipsky to work abstractly. Lipsky recalls that Smith told her artists could only express “real feeling” with abstraction. “He said that [the figurative paintings] I was doing [at the time were] an illustration of feeling, not the feelings themselves.” Lipsky recognized that many of Smith’s own positions about color and composition stemmed from Bauhaus philosophy, as Smith studied at the New Bauhaus in Chicago in 1937–1938.

Very soon after graduating from Hunter, Lipsky was given a solo exhibition at André Emmerich Gallery. Her work was in direct conversation with that of her immediate predecessors Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland, all of whom also exhibited with Emmerich during the

period. Lipsky was included in the Aldrich Museum’s 1970 Lyrical Abstraction exhibition, which traveled to the Whitney Museum of Art. Larry Aldrich defined this new movement, writing:

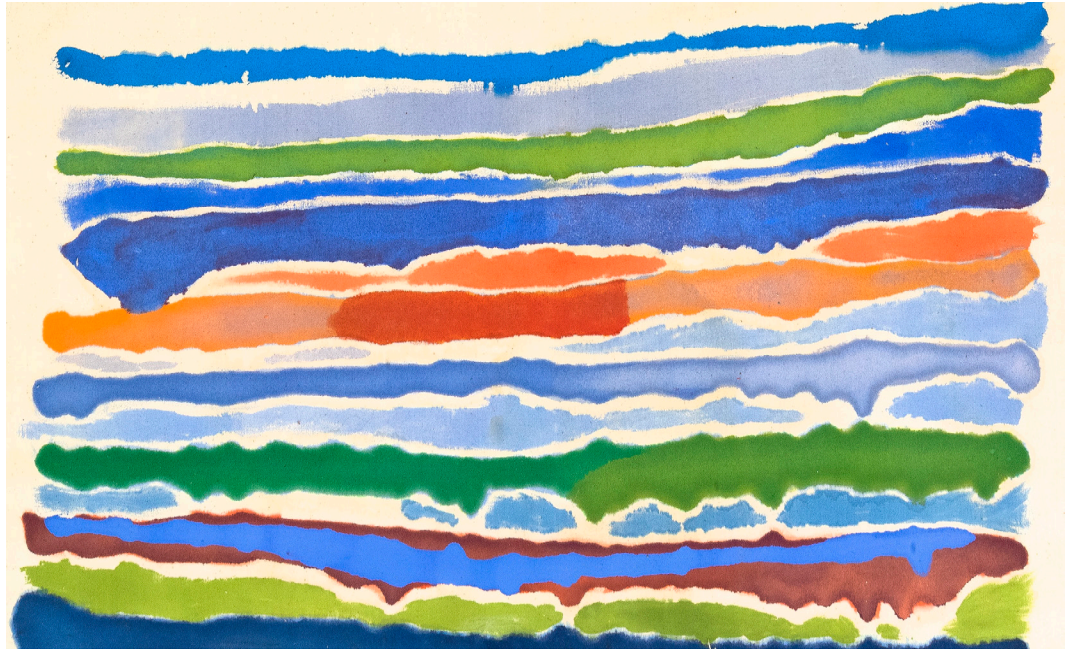
Early last season, it became apparent that in painting there was a movement away from the geometric, hard-edge, and minimal, toward more lyrical, sensuous, romantic abstractions in colors which were softer and more vibrant. Painters were creating, in significant numbers, works that were visually “beautiful”—up to then, in the art world of the sixties, a dirty word... The artist’s touch is always visible in this type of painting, even when the paintings are done with spray guns, sponges or other objects.

Lipsky’s description of her process is indeed sensuous: the smells, the feelings, the movements between painter and painting. The resulting works do not refer to specific things or places, even with titles like *Firefly* and *Wooster*, but they are about the physicality and pleasure of their making, and the interactions that occur, between water, color, and cotton duck, and the beauty that results at these meeting-points. Hers is a process that balances intuition and spontaneity

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with a more measured approach, as she stands back to survey what has been made, and only then decides where the edges of the painting will be.

Lipsky has been called “an unrepentant abstract painter.” She has said that her goal as an artist is “getting an image that resonates, that has some magic to it, that creates an aura. It’s that ‘there it is’ feeling in the painting. Really, it’s not something you can put into words. If you could, you wouldn’t have to paint it.”



Pat Lipsky | *Wooster II* | 1974
acrylic on canvas
35 3/8h x 58 1/8w in

The edges of her Wave paintings are an adaptation of Jackson Pollock’s drips. In the summer of 1969, Lipsky was living in Springs, on the east end of Long Island, and she “thought being that close, some of the Pollock vibe might waft my way.” She had her first encounter with Pollock as a teenager, and it was formative.

I was about fourteen and I wandered into MoMA—simply because I was interested in painting. I was also interested in Manhattan style which could be studied there (one had to wear the obligatory outfit, black tights, leotard top, and Capezio shoes—very Audrey Hepburn—just to get past the admissions desk). So, I walked into this room and there were these strange paintings up, a lot of them. As I walked further in and looked around the room it felt like it was shifting, I became dizzy and nauseous and was forced to leave without even checking the name of the artist. But I didn’t forget the images that had, perhaps in their freedom, threatened me. In a college art class a few years later, there were reproductions shown and I figured out that the paintings had been by Jackson Pollock and were in his 1956 Memorial Exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art.

One of Lipsky’s closest friends in the art world was the critic Clement Greenberg. Lipsky related to and respected the rigor of Greenberg’s discerning eye and his objectivity in questions of taste. Lipsky remains steadfast in her belief that beauty and “an expression of rightness” (Mark Rothko’s term)—created by the right color relations and compositional organization—are primary to painting. Lipsky met Greenberg at André Emmerich in the 1960s and reconnected with him in the 1970s when he was lecturing at Bennington College and she was living in Hoosick Falls, NY, near the Vermont border. They remained friends throughout his life, engaged in lively conversations—Greenberg frequenting Lipsky’s studio, sharing ideas and pithy expressions that Lipsky savored. In a poignant *New Criterion* article that serves as a memoir of their friendship,

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It occurs to me now that, so far, Clem himself has not stood the test of time. I seem to be the only person still talking about him. It's like I'm standing on the shore, and the boat that is the art world is way, way off in the distance. No one has replaced him—not in New York and not for me. Clem is the only person I've ever known who stood for something.

Lipsky's work has been widely exhibited and is represented in public collections including the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

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For further information, contact: press@ericfirestonegallery.com