

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JANUARY 1, 2023

Surpassing Structure
Mike Childs & James Isherwood

◆◆◆

Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson
433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY 12534

◆◆◆

January 5—February 19, 2023
Opening Reception: Friday, January 6th, 5-7PM

Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to present an exhibition of recent works by Mike Childs and James Isherwood at its Upstate Gallery. Entitled *Surpassing Structure*, this two-person exhibition will be on view at SEFA Hudson from January 5 through February 19, 2023. There will be an opening reception on Friday, January 6th from 5 to 7PM with the artists present.

The practices of Childs and Isherwood are shaped by the outdoor landscapes and the architectural structures that fit within them. Both artists observe, interpret and abstract naturalistic vistas and geometric forms into rich, vivid imagery. They are known for their paintings that depict bold hues and patterns—primarily rendered in acrylic.

At SEFA Hudson, their works are displayed on opposite sides of the Gallery in order to highlight the techniques and the subjects specific to each artist. Childs grounds the exhibition with his colorblock shapes, his lattice formations and his textured surfaces. Isherwood bursts into the space with his swirling fuschia and navy mountains, his golden and violet skies, his precise pathways leading to majestic structures.

Together, they invent environs that marry man-made and natural elements. Their structures evoke architecture; rather than suggesting places one could inhabit, they instead hint at a hybrid of industrial and residential forms. Childs finds inspiration in the train tracks, roads and bridges outside his South Bronx

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

studio; and Isherwood from high end real estate publications that market luxury homes in far-flung resort towns.



In *Surpassing Structure*, Mike Childs will exhibit paintings from several recent series, all painted between 2020 and 2022—along with one painting from his “Animal Behavior” series, created in 2017. These include works from “Collection of Needs,” “Recycled” and “Marches On,” the latter a group of small works on paper in watercolor and ink.

Childs’ geometric abstractions feature his characteristic honeycombed forms and angular grids, overlaid against flat washes of colors. The colors—clearly not direct from the tube, but mixed by the artist—are neither warm nor cool, but some sort of temperature in between. The forms refer to industrial structures, glimpsed through his studio window in the South Bronx, set against semi-imagined landscapes.

Mike Childs makes his debut with SEFA in this exhibition in the Gallery’s location in Upstate, NY.



James Isherwood will exhibit a selection of his most recent paintings from 2021 and 2022 in *Surpassing Structure*. The artworks vary in size and comprise a mix of works on paper and panel. Isherwood has been a mainstay of the SEFA artist roster. He has shown at the Gallery’s UWS, LES and Hudson locations—with his first exhibition in 2008 entitled *Regarding Arcadia*.

Isherwood’s vibrant landscapes interpret the world as he sees it—through his technicolor visions. Seasides and night skies mingle with architectural forms. His style as a painter is crisp and clear, yet boldly injected with fantastical colors. Often, strong horizon lines dominate the environments, and the man made structures are a stark yet alluring contrast to the surrounding nature. Isherwood flips our preconceived notions of where natural and man-made elements belong. Trees bisect buildings, moons hang impossibly large, and intricately drawn starry skies are sometimes placed below horizon lines. After recently completing a residency in Ithaca, NY, the artist is also producing more abstracted pieces whose colors are equally mesmerizing.

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

MIKE CHILDS

Biography:

Mike Childs (Canadian, b. 1965) received his BFA from the University of Guelph, Canada, and an MFA from Florida State University. He is the recipient of several awards including 2002 and 2021 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grants, the 2022 Bronx Arts Council award and a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Award. At 26 he received an award to live, paint and teach in Florence, Italy from Florida State where he absorbed the murals and architecture of the medieval city. He has had numerous solo and two person shows since his first solo show in 2005 at the Cue Foundation of Art curated by Cameron Martin. He maintains a studio in the south Bronx where he draws inspiration from the architecture and walls since 2011. Recent shows at; The Bronx River Art Center, 2021, David Richard Gallery NY 2020 and 2021, The Spartanburg Museum of Art, SC, 2021, the Wave Hill Gallery 2019 and the Heidi Cho Gallery, NY in 2008 curated by Rafael DiazCasa. In 2020 during the pandemic, he and artist Melissa Staiger created an ongoing 8 artist curatorial collective Streaming which premiered at the Stand 4 Gallery in 2021 His work has been reviewed by Roberta Smith and Holland Cotter in the New York Times, and recently by David Rhodes in the Brooklyn Rail.

Artist Statement:

I am a Canadian artist working in New York City since 1995. I use the different mediums of acrylic paint, ink and pencil in creating different bodies of work. Arriving in New York City, I was an active participant in the vibrant Williamsburg 90s visual art community and worked as an assistant to both famed SoHo gallery owner Holly Solomon, the estate of Gordon Matta-Clark and legendary new media artist Nam June Paik. Keeping studios in the city for over two decades, my most recent exhibitions include "The Journey: grids, color and curvilinear forms, 2004 to 2020" at the David Richard Gallery, "Painting works" ChaShaMa, "Hard Edged" Bronx River Art Center and "Formation" Spartanburg Museum of Art. I am currently working in my South Bronx studio where my imagery is informed by the architecture and physical reality of the local walls and bridges. I am creating different bodies of work on both canvas and paper which are contiguous with one another and encompass my main themes. The subjects of architecture, construction, demolition and urban textures were born out of the enormous growth and development in the Toronto I saw growing up. This visual environment has formed my concept of abstraction as an activity of continual process. I continue to view painting as a construction site of ideas, in the process of becoming something, like a city itself. My process begins from a simple sketch, photo, or general idea that I often garner from both my own photographs and cultural books I am reading. These are then realized into a series of images on the canvas or paper. I work in this manner to allow myself an open time and space to stretch out visual ideas without a definitive stopping point. In recent years, interests such as built forms in the insect world and the mutable nature of deteriorating structures focus my works on the color, texture, and line of urbanization and recently the natural upstate NY environments that I've experienced. My painting is also fueled by my love of contemporary and historic art, graffiti and the live jazz music that I have access to here in New York City. These drive my vision to always develop and change.

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

JAMES ISHERWOOD

Biography:

James Isherwood is a New York based painter (b. 1971, Fall River, MA) who is currently based in Brooklyn, NY. His work examines architecture and landscape within the surreal context of alternate realities, time, memory and place.

His paintings have been shown in New York, Toronto, Miami, Atlanta, Dallas and Valencia, Spain. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from Parsons School of Design in New York. Isherwood has been awarded residencies from The Constance Saltonstall Foundation For The Arts, (2022) Fellowship, Ithaca, New York; Willapa Bay AiR (2022), Oysterville, Washington; The Mabel Residency at The Norman Bird Sanctuary (2019), Middletown, RI and Virginia Center For Creative Arts, (2018) Robert Johnson Fellowship, Amherst, Virginia. Multiple works are represented in the US Department Of State Art Bank Collection, Washington D.C. and numerous private collections.

A solo exhibition in November 2022 was the inaugural show of Susan Eley Fine Art's new location in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In January 2023, a two-person exhibition of new paintings paired with painter Mike Childs will open at Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Future Memory* at Galeria Ana Serratos, Valencia, Spain (2021-22). Two person exhibitions include *Space Deconstructed* at Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson, NY (2021); *A Sense Of Place* at Susan Eley Fine Art, New York, NY (2019). Recent group exhibitions include *Homegrown* at Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY (2020); *Friends From Social Media* at Thomas Deans Fine Art, Atlanta, Georgia (2019).

Artist Statement:

Architectural protagonists inhabit a quiet unfolding of time, contemplating contrasting notions of what is public and private in scenes devoid of human presence. The paintings suggest alternate realities within each work while offering a liminal approach to contemporary landscape painting. Drawing upon natural and imagined worlds, the paintings evoke the mystery and beauty of architecture within psychedelic landscapes, dreams and timeless memories of place. Intuitive choices determine various pictorial outcomes by utilizing chance and connecting with the unconscious, thereby informing the genesis of each landscape. Coupling architectural structures, random actions of gestural chaos and atmosphere, balance and harmony become evident. Contradictory spatial formations filter saturated washes of paint, threading multiple realities within the landscapes. Hard-edged structures manifest and float revealing reflections layered over subtle patterns lending nuance to impossible physical instances. Serving as a vehicle for engaging the intellectual and aesthetic through stream of consciousness association, the paintings transport the viewer to new hybrids of memory and thought.

Susan Eley
— Hudson —
Fine Art

Although firmly rooted in abstraction, my work makes clear references to the natural world. I spend as much time as I am able near the water: listening, observing, and collecting. My vocabulary of images has been developing over many years and is deeply personal. These forms are the characters in my story, the narrative within each painting and the evolving arch of my studio practice. I celebrate the pure physicality of my materials while also exploring their alchemistic and illusory potential. Subject matter and process are seamlessly interwoven; the evolution of each painting, both technically and conceptually, is the subject. I want my work to be beautiful, but at the same time unsettling; serious, but with a comedic aspect. In each painting I strive to create a world of light and movement, space and joy, that feels at once familiar while hinting at something ethereal and unknown.