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Abstract Painting Gets the Spotlight at Edward Cella

When it comes to abstraction, artist techniques have run the gamut, from Jackson Pollock's expressive and chaotic drip method to Sol Lewitt's meticulous instructions for the completion of his works; artists have exercised absolute control over their art, or relinquished it, embracing chance interventions, in equal measure. The development of process-driven art, which foregrounds the action taken to produce artwork and makes the work itself secondary, was in many ways a reaction to the mathematical dictates and pure forms favored in Minimalist art.

Two abstract artists at Edward Cella Art and Architecture, Spencer Lewis and Joshua Aster, find a midpoint between these distinct approaches, employing both random elements and organized systems of production; they engage in repetitive processes, while leaving room for spontaneous mark-making, experimentation, and chance visual relationships. In his current exhibition *Paint Object*, Spencer Lewis showcases bold, graphic paintings that he creates through a series of steps: he begins by rendering a simple grid onto a surface—typically canvas or cardboard—then repeatedly bisects it with strokes of paint, building up layers of the material, before carving into it, or applying physical objects to its surface. The resulting, large-scale works display the rough vibrancy and energy of graffiti or Gutai-style action painting, but are anchored in the artist's methodical process.

In a similar vein, Joshua Aster carefully organizes his intricate, abstract patterns, producing complex layers of dense, snaking lines of color in *Thicket* (2013), or a captivating mosaic of twinkling diamond shapes in *Panes* (2013), which could resemble a bejeweled surface or the pixellated fragments of a digital image. Aster's paintings, with their underlying systems of arrangement, appear to share the same DNA, but at the core of his process is a readymade aesthetic, giving each of his works a unique quality. To create the paintings on view in his current exhibition, *Innerrverse*, he gathered objects from around his home—fragments of broken tableware, baskets, or picture frames—before



arranging them on canvases, tracing their shadows, and transforming the resulting marks into closely knit patterns.

Through their respective processes, Lewis and Aster have created new bodies of work that offer fresh, bold, and distinct contributions to the art of abstract painting.

Paint Object and Innerrverse are both on view at Edward Cella Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, Jan. 11th–March 1st, 2014.

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