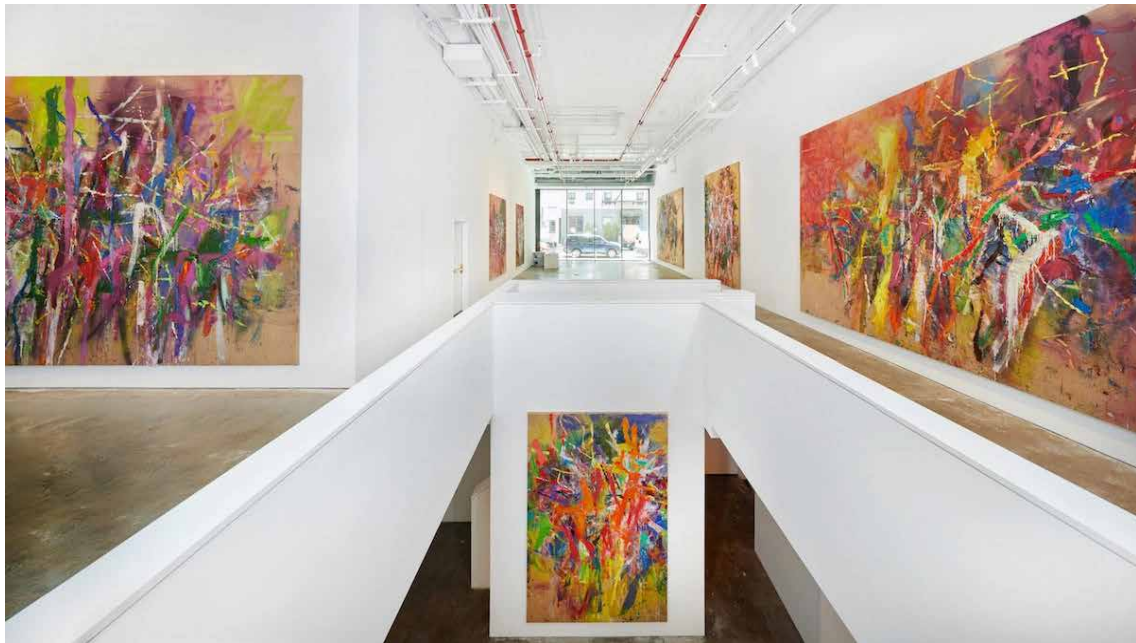


BlackBook

Spencer Lewis' Expressionism Fully Flowers w/ New Vito Schnabel Gallery Exhibition

June 1, 2022



Installation view: Spencer Lewis, Jacques Lewis, Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York; Artworks © Spencer Lewis; Photo by Argenis Apolinario; Courtesy of the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery

Spencer Lewis was born in Hartford, CT in 1979, two decades after Jackson Pollock had lost his life in a tragic car accident, and right around the time Willem de Kooning was beginning to lose his memory to Alzheimer's disease. But the wild intensity of their work seemed to find its way into his approach to painting, as was immediately visible in the exhibition *Spencer Lewis: Four New Works*, which New York's Vito Schnabel gallery staged in summer of 2021.

It was apparently the start of something bigger, as Lewis returns to the gallery, this time to Schnabel's 19th Street space, with a new show titled *Jacques Lewis*, which is actually meant as a sincere dedication to the artist's father.

The twelve new canvases presented here feel somehow simultaneously chaotic and yet tightly controlled in their visceral force. Schnabel himself has actually been following Lewis' work for more than a decade, and during that time has marveled at his ability to continually reshape the contemporary abstract landscape.

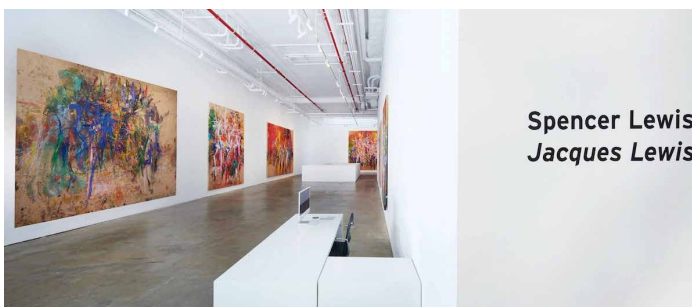
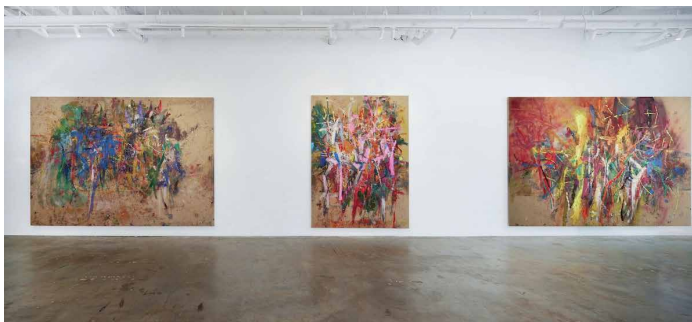
"He is one of the painters working today who is pushing the boundaries of abstraction. These latest works in our exhibition are some of the most powerful and challenging I've seen recently."



SPENCER LEWIS

Of course, Vito's father Julian led a quite successful movement to revive Expressionist painting during the anything-seemed-possible '80s. And his two NYC galleries plus Santa Monica and St. Moritz have been notably carrying on that mission, having staged past shows by the likes of Sterling Ruby, Chaz Guest, Robert Nava, and even the exalted Francesco Clemente.

"[We have] a strong, definitive commitment to painting," he enthuses, "and to a range of people who address the medium with tremendous originality, both celebrating and challenging its conventions, whether their idiom is figuration or abstraction...or a hybrid of the two."



But Lewis' work stands apart for its sense of the truly unfettered and the breathtakingly epic, his lines and colors converging like an awesome tempest on a canvas. And certainly that is what the proponents of Expressionism have for so long strived for, in their quest to explicate the often inexplicable scope of human emotion. That this is the Los Angeles based painter's largest show to date then, offers the unique opportunity to fully absorb the magnitude of that explication.

"Spencer paints from the gut and is extremely soulful," Schnabel observes. "And I think it's beautiful that he dedicated this milestone in his life and practice to his lovely father and friend Jacques."

Spencer Lewis' *Jacques Lewis* will be on view at the Vito Schnabel gallery through July 9.