



52 WALKER ST | NOV 2 – DEC 22, 2023

# Josiah McElheny

## *Geometries for an Imagined Future*

Josiah McElheny, *Projection into Another Future (Heptagonal Antiprism)*, 2023, Unique panel painting with inlaid solid optical glass and sheet mirror interior, 28 1/8 x 28 1/8 x 2 3/8 in. (71 1/2 x 71 1/2 x 6 cm).

James Cohan is pleased to present *Geometries for an Imagined Future*, an exhibition of new work by Josiah McElheny, on view at 52 Walker Street from November 2 to December 22, 2023. This is McElheny's third solo exhibition with James Cohan. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist on Thursday, November 2 from 5:30-7:30 PM.

For over three decades McElheny has engaged in an expert and in-depth study of glassmaking techniques, using this knowledge to create sculptural assemblages, paintings and multi-media installations that propose expanded views of history, from the scientific to the art historical. He looks to the histories of art, architecture, dance, music, fashion, film, literature and science, searching for ideas from the past that could point a way to the future. Most recently, McElheny has gravitated toward the story of mathematics, where proposals or methods might still be as radical today as they were hundreds of years ago.

Geometry has provided us tools for understanding the shapes and spatial relationships of individual objects, both in relation to one another and within the world at large. Historically, the greatest thinkers have attempted to find perfect shapes in the world – but have instead discovered irregularity, individuality, and diversity more often than sameness.

In *Geometries for an Imagined Future*, McElheny proposes that geometries, specifically ones of this irregularity, can serve as sociopolitical tools for finding answers to large questions. The multiplicities found in these complex

forms elucidate a progressive idea, or shape, of the future, one that begets a much needed hopefulness.

This exhibition presents four bodies of work centered on an exploration of complex, irregular geometries embedded within innovative display methods. These works, which highlight the prismatic and refractive potentials of looking through and beyond the surface of solid glass, can be characterized as hybrids between painting and sculpture. With opaque, reflective and transparent surfaces, the artist obscures delineations between the expected or assumed dimensionalities of a flat painting, or a relief sculpture. This hybrid prompts the viewer to shift their gaze actively, so the artwork is constantly in conversation with the scale and engagement of the human body. The ever-changing vistas inherent in these works, morphing as the viewer moves around them, demonstrate that a hopeful future might be found within the ongoing potential to discover spaces and structures that are not invented, but simply to be found or rediscovered within nature.

Josiah McElheny (b. 1966, Boston, MA) has exhibited widely, including solo shows at the Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, CA (2019); Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, TX (2018); MAK Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Austria (2016); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2013), Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (2012), Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England (2011), Museo de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2009), Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2007), The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2007), Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain (2002), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2001), The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA (1999) and the Seattle Art Museum, WA (1995). His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Fine Art, Boston, MA; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; and Tate Modern, London, UK among others. McElheny lives and works in New York, New York.

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