

Charles Moffett

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Annie Armstrong, "Leaving Sotheby's, Charles Moffett Will Open Gallery in Manhattan's Chinatown With Lily Stockman Show," ARTNEWS, April 12, 2018

ARTNEWS



Works by Lily Stockman at her studio in Los Angeles.
JEFF McLANE/COURTESY CHARLES MOFFETT GALLERY

Before he even signed a lease, Charles Moffett knew that the first exhibition in his gallery in New York would be of Lily Stockman's glowing, spare abstract paintings. Moffett, who left his position as vice president and co-head of day sales at Sotheby's to open the space, told *ARTnews*, "I didn't know when it was going to be, but I knew it was going to be her work."

Now there is a date. On May 4, Stockman's show, "Loquats," will open at Charles Moffett Gallery on 265 Canal Street in Chinatown. The rough, wood floors and high, arching ceilings are

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reminiscent of a classic SoHo gallery space, and its warm character is what convinced Moffett to rent it. “It really became apparent end of last year that I needed to be in a space of my own,” he said, “and I needed to show artists of my own generation.”

Going into the art business, Moffett has followed in the footsteps of his father, Charles S. Moffett, who organized storied shows of Impressionism at the Metropolitan Museum of Art before going to Sotheby’s, where in 2012 he won a version of Munch’s *The Scream* (1895) for a client for \$119.9 million, then the most ever paid for a work at auction. The price point will be decidedly lower at the son’s gallery, given its focused on artists early in their careers.

Moffett has been following Stockman for some time, “When she got out [of grad school at N.Y.U.] and moved to L.A., she started making these unbelievably beautiful abstract paintings that blend painters from Agnes Martin to Milton Avery to [Billy] Al Bengston,” the dealer said. “Both through her hand and gesture, but also her color palette and ability to take abstract work and make it figurative in a certain way, I feel as though it’s just such a different approach to what a lot of artists her age are doing.”

Stockman, who has had one-person shows at Gavlak and Luis De Jesus in Los Angeles, said that spring in that city renewed her commitment to color, which can be lush and lurid in her works. She was taken specifically with the deep blues of morning glories, which she likens to the blues characteristic in Renaissance paintings of the Virgin Mary (Piero della Francesca’s *Madonna del Parto*, 1460), and with the unique fruit of loquat trees. “The fruit looks like an apricot,” Stockman said. “But with this luscious, transparent flesh. When the light hits it right, you can see the pit. I think that’s how to think of these paintings.”

The show will be on view through June 30, and Moffett said that he plans to have most shows have a similar duration—seven or eight weeks, generally. “I feel as though shows are getting shorter and shorter, and the turnover is so quick,” Moffett said. “I want to be able to provide a space and an exhibition schedule for artists that is a nice, long run.”