

# ALEXANDRE

## Stephen Westfall



### **Stephen Westfall: *Ornithology***

**September 4 – October 25, 2025**

**Opening Reception: Thursday, September 18, 2025,  
5:30 to 7 pm.**

New York, NY . . . Alexandre Gallery is pleased to present *Ornithology*, an exhibition of new works by Stephen Westfall. Acting as a miniature survey, the exhibition will feature new paintings, works on paper and a large-scale mural installation celebrating Westfall's decades-long experimentation with color, planarity, and form. This marks the artist's first solo exhibition since 2021.

An exaltation of larks, a charm of finches, a murmuration of starlings. Drawn from the title of one of the monumental paintings featured in the exhibition, *Ornithology* alludes to several of the influences and resonances within Westfall's practice; invoking the structured improvisation of Charlie "Bird" Parker and his eponymous tune, the geometric nature of migratory flight patterns, and the angularity of avian beaks. In Barnett Newman's famous words, "aesthetics is for artists what ornithology is for the birds."

The exhibition will showcase Westfall's investigation of aesthetics and the color plane—featuring intimately scaled gouaches and larger paintings on canvas—with the largest work measuring over seven feet tall. As he paints, Westfall carefully considers planes of color, laying them flush to a neighboring plane by brush. Over time, his planar shapes and compositions have gradually let go of a strict relationship to the grid, to the point that some of his work leaves the grid behind altogether while still hewing to patterned repetition of forms, most often diamonds.

While still insistent on abstraction, Westfall's recent paintings embrace a more flexible range of movement, conjuring geometric elements more evocative of landscape and the figure. Living and working in the country, he often perceives figuration emerging out of the patterns of the landscape, like "ghosts stepping out of wallpaper." Here, the paintings act as figures themselves, carrying the spirits of painterly influence from Arthur Dove, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, and others.

The exhibition will also debut a new site-specific wall installation created by the artist on the occasion of the show. The mural will thread along the stairwells and landings connecting the two floors of the gallery's East 73rd Street space and will remain on view through 2026. Other public works by Westfall include a commission from the MTA at the 30th Avenue Station in Queens, New York, and site-specific works at the University of California Santa Barbara's Museum of Art, Design, and Architecture, Art OMI, the McNay Museum, and Rutgers University. Alexandre Gallery has represented Stephen Westfall since 2019.

Stephen Westfall (b. 1953) received his MFA in 1978 from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His first solo exhibition in 1984 at Tracey Garet in New York's East Village earned reviews that took

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note of his particular brand of geometric abstraction. Exhibitions followed during the 1980s and into the 1990s at Daniel Newburg Gallery in New York, Galerie Paal in Munich, and Galerie Wilma Lock in St. Gallen, Switzerland. An exhibition of paintings took place at Andre Emmerich Gallery in New York in 1995, followed by several exhibitions at Lennon, Weinberg, Inc., and Galerie Zurcher in Paris. Recent work has been exhibited at Kunstgalerie Bonn in Germany and David Richard Gallery in Santa Fe. Westfall taught as a professor at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University for twenty years.

Image: Stephen Westfall, *Ornithology*, 2025.

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