

Seattle, WA
October 7, 2025



Jonathan Lasker: Drawings and Studies

October 25, 2025–September 27, 2026

Frye Salon + Jonathan Lasker

October 25, 2025–September 20, 2026

The Frye Art Museum announces *Jonathan Lasker: Drawings and Studies* and *Frye Salon + Jonathan Lasker*, related exhibitions that together create a focused presentation of one of contemporary painting's most distinctive voices. *Jonathan Lasker: Drawings and Studies* features a selection of the artist's drawings and oil studies on paper, while *Frye Salon + Jonathan Lasker* intermingles approximately one dozen of the artist's large canvases with the Frye's founding-era collection, casting both bodies of paintings in a new light. The latter exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue featuring a new interview with the artist by Frye Executive Director Jamilee Lacy.

Jonathan Lasker, an influential figure in postmodern abstraction, challenges the conventions of painting through his energetic, idiosyncratic works. What at first glance may seem like chaotic doodles or pure abstractions are in fact careful explorations of painting's fundamental properties—figure, ground, space, depth, color, and perspective. Lasker is known for creating his own visual language, which includes biomorphic forms, thick black lines, layered scribbles, and combinations of flat and textured surfaces. He uses line, impasto, and a unique approach that blurs the lines between abstraction and figuration. These distinctive techniques invite questions about the nature of representation.

"From the beginning, I wanted my paintings to become as pictorial as possible," Lasker explains. "I started painting at a time when the picture plane needed to be filled back in, after Minimalism, and after it was discredited by Conceptualism. Although my forms are not recognizable, they do act as things in real-world space and are 'actors' in a constructed space that is, at times, like a proscenium stage. So, if these paintings are abstract, it is not a pure abstraction."

Jonathan Lasker: Drawings and Studies brings together a selection of Lasker's works on paper created between 1986 and 2021, offering an intimate look at his evolving process. These preparatory pieces also serve as a prelude to *Frye Salon*, where a selection of Lasker's large vibrant paintings appear within the floor-to-ceiling hang of the museum's collection.

This pairing of contemporary works with the museum's founding-era collection—primarily nineteenth-century European Romantic Realism and Munich Secessionist paintings—is an experimental approach that explores the continuous cycle of rebellion and reinvention that drives the evolution of painting as a medium. Their juxtaposition reveals shared formal concerns that transcend time and style. From the late-nineteenth century break with traditional realism seen in the Munich Secession, to Lasker's rejection of Minimalism in the 1980s, artists have continually subverted established norms. Both Lasker and the Munich Secessionists, for example, rejected the constraints of academic verisimilitude and sought new ways to suggest narrative within a painting's picture plane.

Frye Salon + Jonathan Lasker underscores how painting remains a dynamic force, constantly evolving and reimagining itself in response to the cultural and artistic challenges of each era. Lasker notes the rich potential for seeing his work anew in the context of *Frye Salon*: "the genre aspect of my works could come forward and the pictorial quality could become apparent, meaning that although their forms are abstract, they can also be construed as landscapes, still lifes, or portraits, which is why I started to do them initially—to get out of the dead end of Minimalism!"



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jonathan Lasker (born 1948, Jersey City, New Jersey) is an American artist currently based in Munich, Germany. Lasker is an accomplished artist with a career spanning more than five decades. Trained at CalArts (California Institute of the Arts) in Valencia, California, during its heyday of conceptual and feminist art, Lasker studied painting. This was a contradiction to the de rigueur of the program, but his unorthodox and postmodern aesthetic demonstrates the visionary art school's resounding influence. Today, Lasker is featured in prominent public and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris; among many others. His work has been featured in monographs, as well as in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United States and Europe.

Jonathan Lasker: Drawings and Studies is organized by Faith Brower, Director and Curator of Collections.

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Images: Jonathan Lasker. *Domestic Setting with Post-Partum Anxiety*, 1999. Oil on linen. 96 x 128 in. Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali, Thaddaeus Ropac and Timothy Taylor; Portrait of Jonathan Lasker. Courtesy the artist, Greene Naftali, Thaddaeus Ropac and Timothy Taylor. Photo: Barbara Probst

About the Frye Art Museum

Founded in 1952, the Frye is Seattle's free art museum, bringing together art and new ideas within a stunning Olson Sundberg Kundig-designed building in historic First Hill. The museum connects Seattle with the art and artists of our time. We collect, exhibit, program, and build community around a wide range of modern and contemporary art, with a special focus on amplifying the voices of living artists. Learn more at fryemuseum.org.

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