

GOWEN CONTEMPORARY

14 rue de l'Arquebuse CH-1204 GENEVA

MARTIN KLINE

An Abstraction Rooted Into the World

17 MARCH - 29 APRIL 2011

Gowen Contemporary is delighted to announce an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by the American artist Martin Kline. This is Kline's first solo show in a European private gallery.

Over the past two decades, Kline has developed a unique and remarkable visual language that is resolutely abstract but often with oblique reference to nature, resulting in rigorous and finely crafted paintings and sculptures, beautiful to look at, mysterious in their multifarious cultural references, and philosophically engaging. Kline progressively moved away from his earlier gridded works to create sculptural, three-dimensional paintings. The painted work and the work on paper evolve perfect coherence in parallel.

Kline's work is a reflection on nature and explores the relationship between art and nature through emotional experience, intellectual research as well as artistic practice.

Kline's medium of predilection is encaustic paint. This medium, which is an ancient painting technique which consists of pigmented wax, has been revived from time to time in the long history of its use, yet only a few artists of our generation, notably Jasper Johns and Brice Marden, have successfully used this medium repeatedly. Liquefied by heat, the encaustic is applied in layers that can never quite hide one another, each painting being thus a revelation of its own history. The encaustic is applied by the artist in a variety of ways. Sometimes the works are guided by gestural motions emanating from the movements of the body, akin to the gestural energy which drove Jackson Pollock's method. Flinging paint onto the panel in all directions, such as in *Doppelgänger* ou *Raskolnikov*, establishes the basic form which is then developed further by brush strokes accumulating on these lines of thrown paint. Other times controlled strokes, stripes, dots, grids form the structure. Some works have relatively shallow depth such as in *Newton's Veil*, other works incorporate a substantial build-up surface as in *New Blue Heart*. Painted directly and spontaneously in numerous layers of paint they achieve with sensual dynamic intensity a tactility of surface that evokes textures found in nature.

Kline's work derives from the traditions of European early modernism (Mondrian and Brancusi), in its ideals for harmony and spirituality, and late American modernism (Pollock and Kelly) in its urge for large, open-ended compositions, expressing personal inner states. Kline's paintings also reflect the influence of minimalism in their geometric precision, reduction of forms, simplicity and economy, as well as in their quest for the truth of art, the truth about the process of artistic creation and the fact that the work tells truths about anything but itself.

Kline describes his paintings and sculptures as «physical works of growth» perhaps suggesting an analogous process of growth in nature. Yet his aim is not to reproduce nature but rather to try to imitate the natural world and, if possible, to compete with it. Like nature itself Kline seeks a balance between chaos and order and his works become a means of re-ordering the perceptual world as well as inner moods and establishing an intelligible relationship between nature and human being. Perhaps even the idea of man's control over nature is not completely foreign to Kline acknowledging several cultural references like ancient cultures and the culture of American Indians.

Martin Kline was born in 1961 in Norwalk, Ohio and studied at the Ohio University, Athens, OH. He currently lives and works in Rhinebeck, NY. Kline has exhibited extensively throughout the United States.

Past solo exhibitions include 'Martin Kline, Recent Painting and Sculpture,' Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (2007); Meredith Long & Company, Houston, Texas (2008); Jason Mc Coy, New York (2006, 2005, 2004); Marlborough Gallery, New York (2002, 2000); Stephen Mazoh, New York (1994, 1992).

Forthcoming solo exhibitions include the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut (2012).

Selected group exhibitions include the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA (2005); the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte reina Sofia, Madrid (2004); The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (2003); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2003), the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2003); Gagosian Gallery, Chelsea, New York (2000); the Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York (1993); The Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice and New York (1993); Leo Castelli Gallery, New York (1993); Michael Walls Gallery, New York, (1990 and 1991); the Coos Art Museum, Coos Bay, Oregon (1986).

Kline's works can be found in many **museum collections** including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, the Kennedy Museum, Ohio University, Athens, OH, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, the Portland Art Museum, Oregon, the Triton Foundation, Gooreind-Wuustwezel, Belgium, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, the Albertina Museum, Vienna.

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