

OSVALDO ROMBERG. Color Studies: From Analysis to Metaphor, 1970-2015

Opening Reception: Thursday February 12, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through March 28, 2015

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11-6 pm

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Color Studies: From Analysis to Metaphor, 1970-2015*, Osvaldo Romberg's third exhibition in the gallery and his seventh in New York City. Bringing together works that span the artist's long and prolific career, this retrospective focuses on Romberg's conceptual approaches to understanding color, geometry, their interactions and their permutations across various media. With works on paper, paintings, sculpture and a video, Romberg expands upon theories of color and form set forth by Johann Goethe, Kazimir Malevich and Josef Albers, among others, challenging their strict rationality and formal hierarchies to create a sense of fluidity and insert his own creative personality.

Gonzalo Aguilar asks in the exhibition text, "what is Romberg's Malevich?" In other words, how does Romberg take the modernist, Western-centric theses and make them relevant to his experience and understanding of Latin America. As seen in Romberg's earlier work *Black Malevich* (1976) and then reprised with *Malevich Today* and *Malevich Nightmare*, both from 2014, we can see the evolution of his artistic questioning. What began as straight lines, firm grids and primary colors became slanted lines, obtuse and acute angles and a mixed, uneven color palette. As seen in the *Color Constellation* (1982), first installed in the Sprengel Museum in Hannover in 1984 and then again in Henrique Faria, Buenos Aires in 2012, the painted rods took on an energy of their own as they crisscrossed along the ceiling and throughout the gallery. In 2015, the *Color Constellation* will take on a new form at Henrique Faria, New York, especially for this exhibition. This contamination of the tools of modernism is what Romberg describes as *dirty geometry*: while the art historical roots are clear, the branches have become contorted, commingled, an expression all their own.

While Romberg has spent a lot of time analyzing color and geometry in regards to modernism, he also looks at color as a structural and architectural element of an artwork. In his *Art Histories* series, Romberg takes famous paintings from throughout western art history, breaking them down according to the colors that compose them. As seen in *Analysis of "The Baptism of Christ" (Piero della Francesca)* (1979), hue by hue the painting is unpacked, the magic of the mixed pigments and the forms they come together to represent are laid bare for the viewer. Romberg brings his technical training as an architect into his artistic works: treating his investigations into the nature of color as if they were blueprints, they are filled with scribbled notes of his methods and findings, evidence of his quest to understand the basic composition of what he sees, of what makes up the world around him.

As Aguilar concludes in his text, Romberg, while working within the literal and theoretical frames of color theory, geometric abstraction and conceptualism, is able to carve out a space for himself and his creative vision. The insertion of the body and its idiosyncrasies gives his works a human dimension and a sense of emotion that will forever elude the limits of modernism's rationality.

In the early 1970s, Argentinean conceptual artist **Osvaldo Romberg** (1938) began using a grid to analyze the tone and saturation of various colors. His thorough taxonomies are vibrant, rainbow-like compositions whose optical effects exceed and deform the empirical structure of the grid with their uneven strokes of paint. Romberg's deconstruction of both individual hues and those of famous historical paintings investigate the political and social conventions of looking and seeing. The works on paper from this period are infused with Romberg's interest in art history, philosophy, linguistics, and informational systems.

Romberg has exhibited and curated shows internationally. He is currently Senior Curator at the Slought Foundation in Philadelphia and has guest curated exhibitions at Mana Miami, Habeeb Art and Visual Media Center, Beer Sheva; the Zaritsky Artists' House, Tel Aviv; and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield. He has had individual exhibitions at institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2011); Z.K.M, Karlsruhe (2009); Centro Cultural Recoleta (2008); the Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires (2007); Kunst Museum, Bonn (2007); Museum of Modern Art, Saint Etienne (2005); and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (1999). He has participated in group shows at the Fundación Proa, Buenos Aires (2011); White Box Gallery, New York (2000); the Kwangju Biennial (1997) and XLI Venice Biennial, Israel Pavilion (1995), among others. He lives and works between New York, Philadelphia, Tel Aviv and Ilha Grande, Brazil.

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