

# BARTHA CONTEMPORARY

## EXPANDED FIELD

### FOUR NEW YORK PAINTERS

JAMES HOWELL, WINSTON ROETH, KATE SHEPHERD, JOAN WALTEMATH

MARCH 13 – MAY 2, 2015

Bartha Contemporary is delighted to announce a series of group exhibitions marking the gallery's fifteenth anniversary. Entitled "Expanded Field – Four New York Painters" the first exhibition will take place from March 12 to May 2, 2015. Featuring works by gallery artists James Howell, Winston Roeth, Kate Shepherd and Joan Waltemath. This exhibition is takes place in memory of James Howell, who sadly passed away in late 2014.

The perception of vast expands of nature, seemingly never ending horizon lines and a uniquely American understanding of scale continues to inform numerous exhibitions about American Art. Its influence on post war western art in general is well documented.

This exhibition showcases work by four New York painters, James Howell, Winston Roeth, Kate Shepherd and Joan Waltemath that draw on this American tradition. While each explores the perception of space through abstract means, their works take on distinct characteristics.

A suite of paintings by James Howell, which form part of the artist's life long study into the properties of the colour grey, lie at the centre of the exhibition. Described as looking into fog each work depicts a carefully calibrated gradation from light to dark. Howell's subtle works invite the viewer to consider the possibilities within a seemingly narrow conceptual framework. Each work both embodies the entire series as much as it is a single part thereof. The results are an existential exploration into the process of seeing.

Winston Roeth's paintings equally explore a colour-space, however his work is signified by the artist's unparalleled sensibility for colour and the use of a variety of unorthodox supports. Working with raw pigment and a tempera medium, Roeth's spellbinding paintings often have a dense matt surface that draws the viewer into the intensity of the colour alone, inviting long contemplation of the shifting picture plane. The presence and uncompromising quality of his work explores the phenomenology of colour, Roeth has been described as "...probably the best colour-painter in New York." by American critic Michael Brennan.

Intense colour, an exacting sense of touch, attraction to geometry and the articulation of space are the principal aspects of Shepherd's work. The artist's signature white line drawings on monochromatic reflective colour-fields painted with oil by hand, is highly constructed in appearance yet clearly not mechanic. Each painting invite's the viewer to render an imaginary suggestive space. As the reflective surface of the works further draw the viewer into the picture plane while inadvertently including a reflected image into the painting. The atmospheric of both the monochromatic background and the faint reflections of the room that surrounds it are all pulled together into an exceptionally immersive experience.

Evolving from a proportional grid-system Joan Waltemath's highly layered paintings combine a finely balanced and constructed asymmetry. The underlying grid composition is derived from mathematical systems that reference volume and place. The paintings invite the viewer to 'read' individual sections of the work and investigate the interplay between different elements. Often painted by layering multiple surfaces and then revealing underlying areas, the works interact with the surrounding light conditions, in some cases even counteracting them with phosphorescence. Each work continuously changes in its overall appearance as it reveals new relationships within the structures that compose it.