

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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BLACK & WHITE

November 4 – December 12, 2014

Opening Reception: Tuesday, November 4: 6 – 8 pm



Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974), *Blast II*, 1957, Oil on canvas, 90 x 45 in.

Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present **Black & White**, an exhibition exclusively focused on abstract painting. The installation contextualizes Adolph Gottlieb's Abstract Expressionist masterpiece "Blast II" (1957) with a selection of works by **Vince Contarino**, **David Rhodes**, and **Joan Witek**. Almost completely devoid of color and with an eye on structural simplicity, BLACK & WHITE aims to draw focus on how form, gesture and composition can make for incredible versatility in the abstract language. **Adolph Gottlieb's** "Blast II" counts among the masterpieces of Abstract Expressionism. With its counterpart, "Blast I" (Museum of Modern Art, New York), it is one of the earliest true realizations of Gottlieb's iconic "bursts", for which he is best known. The composition of "Blast II" is based on the striking juxtaposition of tranquility and dynamism: set against a plain white background, a green disc dominates the upper part of the canvas, while hovering above a volatile black mass of gestural marks below. When discussing his signature series in an interview with the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (October 25, 1967), Gottlieb recalled: "...*there was a different type of space than I had ever used and it was a further clarification of what I was trying to do. The thing that was interesting was that it was a return to a focal point, but it was a focal point without the kind of space that had existed in traditional painting. Because this was like a solitary image or two images that were just floating in the canvas space. They had to hold the space and they also had to create all the movements that took place within the rectangle.*" Adolph Gottlieb was the recipient of numerous honors, prizes, and awards. He was the first of his contemporaries to be collected by major institutions, namely the Guggenheim Museum (since 1945) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, (since 1946). He was the subject of 36 solo exhibitions in his lifetime, including a 1968 simultaneous retrospective held at both the Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Other sites for monographic exhibitions include the Jewish Museum, New York (1957, 2001); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (1959); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1963); MoMA (1974); Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (1981); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1981); Tel Aviv Museum (1981); Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (1994); Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York (1994); and Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2010–11).



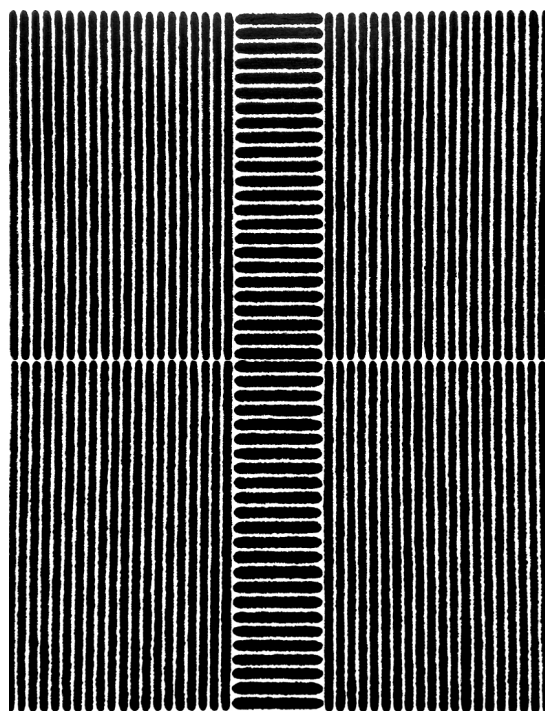
Vince Contarino (b. 1975), *Undertow*, 2012, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 50 in.

Vince Contarino's work is characterized by an ongoing dialogue between gestural marks and graphic forms. He searches for casual gestures and pairs them with more deliberately constructed forms. Though this practice allows for chance and spontaneous discovery, it also embraces an editorial process that is neither restrictive nor indulgent. This ongoing dichotomy makes for rhythmic textures that are intriguingly rich in both subtleties and complexities. Contarino states: "*I've always been interested in the idea of seeing the artist's hand in paintings, but also respond to work that involves conceptual thought and decision-making. There is a certain trance-like state that we all enter to varying degrees when we make our work, but I am invested in balancing that with more conscious thinking about the marks I make and the relationships they have to each other in the paintings.*" Vince Contarino was born in 1975 in New Jersey and has lived in New York for the past several decades. In the past, he has received awards and honors from the New York Foundation for the Arts, The Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation and the Bronx Museum of the Arts.



David Rhodes (b. 1955), *Untitled*, 2013, Acrylic on canvas, 42 x 30 in.

David Rhodes works exclusively in black and white. Rooted in geometry, his compositions are based on the variations of chevron's, V-shaped patterns, which he renders in carbon black paint on raw canvas. Rhodes' dynamic diagonals seem to shift when viewed from different angles. While activating the picture plane, they also succeed in offering a deeper contemplation of the illusory nature of time and space. Addressing how he continues to find versatility in the well-defined parameters of his vocabulary, Rhodes explains: *"Repeating the same elements from one painting to the next is a way of accepting and finding difference. It is never clear what the outcome will be, how it will read or feel, emotionally or psychologically."* David Rhodes was born in 1955 in Manchester, England, and he currently lives and works in Berlin and New York City. His work has been exhibited extensively internationally. Notable exhibitions include Mass Moca, Galerie-Kunsthau and Forum Konkrete Kunst; Notable collections include the Alex Katz Foundation, Uddevalla Konstmuseum, Sweden, The V&A Museum, England, and the CCA Ansdratx, Spain.



Joan Witek (b. 1943), *P-151 Untitled (B. Newman)*, 2009, Pencil and oil stick on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

Joan Witek has worked in black on white since the 1970s. Her compositions, ponder the interplay of differently proportioned masses and shapes in their purest form. Movement manifests either vertically or horizontally, employing the invisible grid as overall structural backbone. Black might traditionally be associated with negative space and the absence of light and color, but in Witek's case it functions as the sole indicator of mark and form. Though seemingly graphic when viewed from afar, Witek embraces nuanced handmade imperfections. Here, subtle expression is found in the outline of shapes, edges, and curves. In that sense, Witek emphasizes personal elements in each of her works: *"Each painting depends on the others for interpretation. They are a handwriting. Although the writing style is relatively uniform, each picture has a uniquely based origin in my emotions or wherever a particular painting comes from..."* Joan Witek's work is in numerous public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Witek lives and works in New York City.

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