

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

9 March 2016

Dan Colen

When I'm Gone

March 21–May 13, 2016

2016年3月21日至5月13日

Opening reception:
Monday, March 21, 6–8pm

開幕酒會：
3月21日（星期一）晚間6時至8時

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Everything I do, whether it's an oil painting, a painting made with a less traditional material, a sculpture, a film or performance—whatever it is comes back to my exploration of the artist's mark, that moment when the art locks into place... even if it's just for a second.

—Dan Colen

Gagosian Hong Kong is pleased to present “When I'm Gone,” Dan Colen's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong, and the first dedicated exhibition of the Flower Paintings, begun in 2010.

In his paintings, Colen questions the very meaning and power of making marks on a canvas. The *Candle Paintings* (begun in 2003) are highly detailed oil paintings of a still from the Disney movie *Pinocchio*. As Colen progressed in the series, painting several iterations of the same animated frame, the image became successively less coalescent, the rendering more individuated and further from the idea of the perfectly blended oil painting. In the *Confetti Paintings* (from 2010), discrete marks hold their own space on the canvas, emphasizing their self-contained energy. Papier-mâché boulders (from 2006) that use *trompe l'oeil* techniques in oil paint to mimic heavy sculptural stone; a series of natural stones painted to look like M&M candies (from 2012); and the deceptive *Birdshit Paintings* (from 2006) underscore the nature of Colen's experiments in aesthetics and representation.

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The deconstruction of an artwork's creation, and the investigation of the meaning imbued in its raw material, has also led Colen to use unconventional materials. This gradual process—the breaking down of the brushstroke and the very elements of the artist's mark—was extended with the visceral, abstract *Bubblegum Paintings* (from 2006). Made of actual bubblegum instead of paint, these works corresponded in some ways to the questions of painting and historical representation that Colen himself seems to ask with oil painting. Grappling with materials over long stretches of time, within each series, he challenges their distinct formal qualities again and again. Chosen for their immediacy and their remoteness from contemporary art discourse, each substance—from chewing gum to street trash—overrides assumptions about the essence of painting. Brash yet fragile, the *Flower Paintings* contain Colen's accumulated impressions from the last six years, not unlike the traditional Daoist landscape painter who must wander through the mountains in order to depict his topography. This series is the culmination of a pivotal phase in Colen's career as a groundbreaking American painter.

With the *Flower Paintings*, Colen relinquishes control of the painterly mark and turns the action of the brushstroke into a smashing or shattering gesture. Instead of paint, natural seasonal and artificially dyed flowers from corner bodegas and markets in New York City were employed to mark the canvas, applied with quotidian objects—rubber mallets, dildos, bowling pins, and billiard balls—rather than paintbrushes. Gradually the flower marks began to smear from the flowers being dragged and pressed into the loose canvas. Residual petals and pistils, adhered by Colen's own pressure, are reminders that these works exist in the physical, as well as metaphysical, world. The *Flower Paintings* demonstrate both Colen's persistent confrontation with the limitations of painting and his surrender to them. The aesthetic impressions are created by measures of force, rather than by the considered or impassioned painterly gesture. In these paintings, Colen has collapsed the distance between subject and object, the represented and the representative—the image of the flower, made by the flower—in his ongoing quest for what lies at the heart of the act of artistic transformation.

Works by Colen will also be presented at the gallery booth at Art Basel Hong Kong, March 23 through March 26.

Dan Colen was born in New Jersey in 1979. He lives and works in New York. His artworks are included in public institutions such as The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens, Greece; Hirschhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; and Jimenez-Colon Collection, Ponce, Puerto Rico, to name a few. Colen's recent solo exhibitions include "Peanuts," Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo (2011); "In Living Color," FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2012); "Dan Colen: The Illusion of Life," Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (2013); "Help!," The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, Connecticut (2014); "The L...o...n...g Count," The Walter De Maria Building, New York, (2014); "Dan Colen: Psychic Slayer," HEART–Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2015); and "Dan Colen: Shake the Elbow," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (2015), among others. His work was included in the 2006 Whitney Biennial in New York, as well as the 12th Biennale de Lyon in 2013. Upcoming solo exhibitions include Dallas Contemporary, opening April 15, 2016.

For further information please contact the gallery at hongkong@gagosian.com or at +852.2151.0555. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Image: *Let's Have a War*, 2016, flowers on bleached Belgian linen, 93 × 74 inches (236.2 × 188 cm) © Dan Colen. Photo by Christopher Burke.

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.