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January 31, 2017



**PAINTING
PAINTINGS
(DAVID REED)
1975**

CURATED BY KATY SIEGEL
AND CHRISTOPHER WOOL

Opening reception:
Tuesday, January 17, 6–8PM
January 17–February 25, 2017

980 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10075

Everyone on the edge of the Grand Canyon was afraid his neighbor, his friend, would jump. I liked to imagine jumping. I ran for the edge, vaulted the guard rail, flung myself into space, feet first, sleeves flapping.

—David Reed

Gagosian New York is pleased to present an exhibition of early brushmark paintings by David Reed. Curated by Katy Siegel and Christopher Wool, this presentation follows the exhibition's premiere at the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University. This is Reed's first exhibition with the gallery.

“Painting Paintings (David Reed) 1975” reunites many canvases first shown in 1975 at Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, which had a strong impact on Christopher Wool, then a young artist. More than forty years later, Reed's paintings are complemented by a group exhibition of artists who were similarly exploring the relationship between process and image-making in painting, sculpture, photography, and film.

When Reed came to New York from Southern California in the 1960s, he entered an art world that was skeptical about the ability of painting to be forward-looking. The young artist sympathized with the humanist, even metaphysical current in painters like his teachers Philip Guston and Milton Resnick, even as he admired the deadpan materiality of contemporaneous experiments in sculpture and film. Seeking to make paintings that were as direct as a poured steel sculpture, between 1974 and 1975 he

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prepared tall, vertical canvases, either as single panels or as many as five panels bolted together; the height of the canvases was determined by the door to his studio, the widths by the limit of his own reach. Working wet into wet, Reed then painted primarily black or red strokes from left to right, top to bottom, and sometimes diagonally, quickly filling the canvas.

These works, presented on the sixth floor of Gagosian's Madison Avenue location, describe particular moments, suggesting both the stillness of the resulting image and the suspended motion of their making. In #49 (1974) red strokes melt into one another on the left side, but become drier and more autonomous as they move to the right. In the center, splatters express a tremor frozen in time, as Reed removed the canvas from the wall while it was still wet, and dropped it. Inevitably, the pure immediacy of the moment vanishes, becoming an image of itself.

These fundamental questions of process and image in art inform the group exhibition presented on the fifth floor. Paintings by Joyce Pensato and Cy Twombly reveal layers of gesture and erasure; Andy Warhol's *Rorschach* (1984) alludes to the hidden meaning behind abstraction; *Pendulum* (1976), a Super 8 film by James Nares, documents a sphere swinging perilously through a desolate Lower Manhattan street; Barry Le Va has installed his *On Center Shatter-or-Shatterscatter (within the Series of Layers Pattern Acts)* (1968–71), stacking panes of glass and smashing all but the top pane with a sledgehammer. Jack Whitten's *The Speedchaser* (1975) was made with a specialized tool designed to spread paint across the entire surface of the canvas with a single gesture. The evidenced actions that run through these works all find parallels in Reed's paintings, which evoke direct human activity, but also inevitably become images as well. The painting by Reed included in the group exhibition, #78-2 (1975), a slender canvas with a thick black vertical stroke on an off-white ground, is echoed, surprisingly, in Sigmar Polke's *Streifenbild IV* (Stripe painting IV, 1968), with its four pastel strokes on a mauve ground.

The most recent works in the exhibition, Wool's *Untitled* (1995), and Josh Smith's *Untitled* (2006), resonate with Reed's 1975 paintings in specific ways. Wool's painting is a picture created through physical and material action; the small Smith canvases were originally used as palettes for larger works, then repurposed as paintings themselves. For Wool, Reed's approach to painting represents a cyclical continuation between generations. In bringing these works together, Siegel and Wool follow Reed's example, challenging linear conceptions of artistic influence and encouraging viewers to trace alternative timelines in swinging arcs, dripping strokes, and reconfigured blots.

Artists exhibited include: David Reed, Barry Le Va, James Nares, Joyce Pensato, Sigmar Polke, Charles Ray, Dieter Roth, Joel Shapiro, Josh Smith, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, Jack Whitten, and Christopher Wool.

"Painting Paintings (David Reed) 1975" is accompanied by an in-depth, fully illustrated book, which expands on the themes of the exhibition, describing the paintings, and also reflecting on the complex relations between past and present. It includes texts by Richard Hell and Reed, as well as an extensive conversation between Siegel and Wool.

David Reed was born in 1946 in San Diego, California and currently lives and works in New York. His work is featured in institutional collections worldwide, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery,

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Buffalo; The Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; FRAC – Auvergne, Clermont Ferrand; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach; Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond; Roswell Museum and Art Center, NM; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, KS, among others. Recent solo institutional exhibitions include “David Reed - You look good in blue,” Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2001, traveled to Kunstverein Hannover, Germany); “Leave Yourself Behind. Paintings and Special Projects 1967–2005,” Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, KS (2005, traveled to Roswell Museum and Art Center, NM; Luckman Gallery, California State University, Los Angeles); “David Reed: Lives of Paintings,” Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, OR (2008); “David Reed – Heart of Glass, Paintings and Drawings 1967–2012,” Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2012); “The Mirror and The Pool,” Kunstmuseum Krefeld, Museum Haus Lange, Germany (2015); “Two by Two: Mary Heilmann & David Reed,” Museum für Gegenwart, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany (2015), and “David Reed: Vice and Reflection – An Old Painting, New Paintings and Animations,” Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL (2016).

Image: David Reed at his exhibition at Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, 1975.
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