

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



LONDON – WALTER DE MARIA AT GAGOSIAN GALLERY THROUGH JULY 30TH, 2016

D. Creahan



Walter de Maria, Truth/Beauty series (detail) (1993 – 2016), © The Estate of Walter De Maria, Photo Joseph Asghar. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery

Comprising two separate series created by the artist during the course of his career, Gagosian Gallery on London's Britannia Street has opened an exhibition of work by renowned minimalist Walter de Maria, opening a dialogue within the artist's own body of work across decades of practice, and through a range of materials that underscore the artist's particular approach to questions of space, subjectivity and time.

Often more lyrical than his contemporaries during the advent of minimalism and conceptualism during the 1960's and 70's, de Maria's works often welcomed progressions through space that seemed to trace a more concrete narrative, placements of work that locked themselves not merely into the wider contextual space of the gallery, but particularly through the viewer's path through it, allowing the viewer's own eye and their pacing, direction or attention to create certain formal progressions through his lines of geometrically arranged pieces. Blocks, rods and plates often stretched out towards the room's vanishing point, as internal compositions allowed a marking of time and space across the field itself.

At Gagosian, this sense of movement finds its voice through two bodies of work. In one series, Truth/Beauty from the mid-1990's, the artist's works move in parallel lines, flat plates topped with carefully placed shaped rods. As the viewer moves across the room, each isolated piece's rods increase in the number of sides, from pentagonal pieces up to octagonal ones, and beyond, culminating with seventeen-sided rods on the other side of the room. This delicate tracing of geometric advancement succeeds in marking space itself, tracing a gradual evolution of form that equally plays on the converging lines of the space itself.

Nearby, the gallery has also selected an earlier series, The Open Polygon, which follows a similar movement through geometric forms across the space of the gallery, this time countered by a set pencil drawings, The Pure Polygon Series, which offers a visual counterpoint, as if the act of following a line through the drawing process had realized itself in three-dimensional space.

This conversation between each body of work notes an impressive consistency in de Maria's artistic vision, and an ever-increasing formal complexity in the development and execution of his work. While the close-cropped shapes of The Open Polygon note an impressive sense of spatial development and narrative, it is the reappearance of this form, echoed in multiple variations and elements in TRUTH / BEAUTY that underscores de Maria's sense of evolution through space, and his work's ability to develop equally through the passage of time.