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EGAN FRANTZ
Not Enough Words

2021. 10. 7 -
2021. 12. 19

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FOUNDRY SEOUL is a contemporary art gallery opened in June 2021.

With a total area of 984.25 m² and an exhibition-only space of 398 m², FOUNDRY SEOUL is located in Hannam-dong, the cultural hub of major galleries, museums, and other alternative spaces in Seoul.

FOUNDRY SEOUL introduces world-renowned blue-chip artists and emerging artists who are drawing special attention from the global contemporary art community. It offers valuable opportunities for the local and global audience to experience various works through its in-depth exhibitions with high standards. In addition, FOUNDRY SEOUL actively engages and communicates with its audience through various programs and leads the communal activities and education in art. In its inaugural exhibition, FOUNDRY SEOUL introduced Henning Strassburger, a Berlin-based painter.

BYFOUNDRY is a new platform presented by FOUNDRY SEOUL. Through its programs, it discovers artists working with more experimental media exploring new possibilities, and it supports their creative activities. It shares their original ideas and questions, and presents new forms of work setting new standards in contemporary art. BYFOUNDRY's first exhibition was 'REPEAT' by KANGHYUK, the experimental design duo with unique aesthetic sense.

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FOUNDRY SEOUL Entrance © Kyung Roh



Egan Frantz, *Not Enough Words*, FOUNDRY SEOUL, 2021 Installation View © Sonongji

TITLE **Egan Frantz, *Not Enough Words***

DATES 7 OCT 2021 - 19 DEC 2021

OPENING HOURS TUE - SUN 11AM - 7PM
(Closed on Mondays)

VENUE **FOUNDRY SEOUL**
223, Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu
Seoul

About the Artist, Egan Frantz

Born in Connecticut, USA, in 1986, Egan Frantz is currently based in New York. After studying literature, philosophy, and art history at Hampshire College, Frantz has been continuing his reflective work on the material world and the role of an artist in it. He has had solo exhibitions at a number of prominent galleries and museums in New York, Los Angeles, and Europe, including Galerie Nagel Draxler, Tilton Gallery, Miguel Abreu, C L E A R I N G, Team Gallery, Roberts Projects, and Neuer Aachener Kunstverein. He has also been consistently presented at major art fairs such as Art Basel Statement and Art Basel Miami Beach Nova.

FOUNDRY SEOUL introduces Egan Frantz's passionate journey towards the beauty of truth

FOUNDRY SEOUL presents *Not Enough Words*, a New York-based artist Egan Frantz's first solo exhibition in Asia from 7 October to 19 December. With 43 works that span over the decade of the artist's oeuvre, the exhibition introduces in detail the artistic journey of the artist who has been exploring ways to capture and express the essence of things themselves that cannot be fully contained within the frame of language. The exhibition is organized to examine the artist's intense line of thought that encompasses his performances, sculptures, and installations in the early 2010s to the abstract paintings with bold colors that he has been focusing on in recent years. As he is pursuing his path to "follow where painting leads," the exhibition invites an opportunity to encounter Egan Frantz's passionate journey towards the beauty of truth that penetrates the artist's oeuvre.

Egan Frantz always poses intellectual and aesthetic challenges. He has been continuously exploring the relationship between language and the nature of matter and phenomena through his works encompassing various media, materials and techniques. He mentions Stefan Mallarmé's symbolic poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (*A throw of the dice will never abolish chance*) as the starting point of artistic journey. He also tells that he is deeply impressed by an American experimental poet Jack Spicer, Jorge Luis Borges' fantastic literature, and the artistic movement of Dadaism. The artist respects their avant-garde attempts to recognize the limitations of written language and tries to experience beauty and sublime by overcoming the restrictions and encountering the truth. He has persistently been carrying out the task of expressing such experiences through visual media.

Over the past decade, the artist's oeuvre has been developing from performance, sculpture, and installation to monochrome paintings using various materials and techniques such as Kleenex toilet paper, corroded copper plates, and laser engraving, which has transformed into large-scale abstract paintings characterized by diverse colors and geometric patterns in the background.

Each stage the artist has gone through is interconnected in ways to establish internal rules for the next stage or provide figurative motifs to it. The spatial arrangement of the exhibition is composed in a way to present a chronology of changes in the artist's practice, and at the same time, in a way that suggests rules and motifs that are repeated and varied. As such, the exhibition conveys the artist's oeuvre to the viewers in a richer and a more profound way.

The artist says that his "attention is focused on watching to see where each painting wants to go in order to ultimately deliver it to that place." What is important, however, is not how the artist arrived there. What is important is that the artist presents us with his unique artistic world through patient investigations, which is "totally lyrical, abstract, none of which could be predictable, but always surprising."



Egan Frantz, *Not yet no longer [Font]*, 2012 © Sonongji



Egan Frantz, *Not Enough Words*, FOUNDRY SEOUL, 2021 Installation View
© Sonongji



Egan Frantz, *Not Enough Words*, FOUNDRY SEOUL, 2021 Installation View
© Sonongji

The exhibition takes place in Exhibition Hall I on the first basement floor, Exhibition Hall II on the second basement floor, and void. Respectively presented in Exhibition Hall I are sculptures, installations, and paintings with performative elements. Exhibition Hall II focuses on abstract paintings that the artist has been concentrating on in recent years.

The exhibition welcomes the viewers with *Untitled[numbers]*, 2010, which the artist refers to as his starting point, and *Bubbles*, 2012 series, which consists of six champagne bottles, six plastic buckets filled with water, and an air tube. Drawings where Mallarmé's figurative poems are substituted with the "constellation of numbers" and installation works, which fill the entire exhibition space with the sound of bubbling water drops, synesthetically present the concealment and mystery of truth, which is a major theme that permeates the artist's oeuvre.

The room with *Not yet no longer [Font]*, 2011, a sculpture made from an aluminum baguette pan and a small font, and *Diagram Painting #8 (Extremely Fragile)*, 2015, a two-dimensional painting made by elaborately pasting Kleenex toilet paper, continues. The horizontal and vertical intersection between the two works is condensed in one scene, which shows a long process where the artist pays attention to the grid and turns it into abstraction, along with *Scale 1:1 (Tuerlinckx)*, 2020.

The exhibition continues with the two-dimensional works that are produced as a result of the artist's performance. *Lowghost*, 2014 series is complete with a whole can of blue aerospray paint in homage to Lawrence Weiner and Stephen Prina; the *Baguette Sculpture*, 2013 and *Oat Paintings*, 2016 series are made of materials that correspond to words in idioms; the artist's monochrome paintings are entitled according to different shapes that accidentally occur while engraving receipts collected from everyday life with laser. The monochrome paintings reflect the artist's broad knowledge and deep thought while revealing cheerful side as an artist who depicts serious and speculative themes in a humorous way.

Exhibition Hall II focuses on the artist's abstract paintings. The artist creates compositions where the background and foreground, colors and shapes collide and coexist with a sense of tension. *Rocking Horse*, 2020 and *The Angelic Doctor*, 2019 present the repeated grid or the background divided into large blocks, which functions not just as a surface but also as a unique area on which different elements are to be placed. Following the rules set by the background, the artist fills in the shape and color on the foreground. It then becomes an unpredictable lump as in *One is plenty, two is too many, and three is not enough*, 2019 or a unique pattern or silhouette that stimulates the imagination as in *The Praying Boy*, 2020 or *Morning (after Kolbe)*, 2019. The background and foreground that are constructed in such a way overlap each other, suggesting a number of possible aesthetic combinations that do not converge to a single focal point.

The void section, which is the final part of the exhibition and the wall connecting the two floors, is filled with eight new works and one recent work measuring 180 x 240 centimeters. The works presented in this section are plentiful with new elements that add more layers to the composition and generate more complexity. Here, the artist summons all or part of the titles of his works on the screen, as seen in *Fish*, *Neither*, 2021, *Der*, 2021, or *American Painting*, 2020. In *Supi*, 2021 and *Fun Oyster Lady*, 2021, unintelligible symbols are drawn on a large scale. Such gestures stimulate and twist the viewers' existing sense of language and signs, deepening the tension between the elements and facilitating the occurrence of more aesthetic combinations. As a result, the artist moves closer to the beauty of the essence that cannot be fully captured by one or a few words or symbols.

Arranged in the grid of 3 x 3, the paintings in void are staged to face *Untitled[numbers]* that the viewers first encounter when they enter the exhibition. The beginning and the end of the exhibition are connected through morphological similarity and spatial arrangement. This reminds the viewers of Egan Frantz's rich and diverse lineage and asks them to embrace the beauty of truth that resonates between works, transcending time and sequence.



Egan Frantz, *Untitled [numbers]*, 2010
 Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Egan Frantz

Egan Frantz
Untitled [numbers]
 2010
 Ink on paper in artist's frame
 12 parts; 61 x 71 cm / each

A series of 12 printed works that the artist takes as the starting point of his artistic journey. In this work, Egan Frantz translated *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, a monumental poem of French symbolic poet Stephan Mallarmé, who showed the possibility of letters as pure forms through strange type arrangement or page division, into numbers. By replacing the letters with numbers, the most abstract concept, the artist reinforced the visual and artistic aspect of figurative poetry as a "visible poem".

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Egan Frantz, *Lowghost #12*, 2014
 Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Simon Vogel

Egan Frantz
Lowghost #12
 2014
 Acrylic glass, powder-coated aluminum, rebonded foam, 3003 aluminum, and hardware: laser etched & Acrylic paint (1 full can of aerosol paint)
 152.4 x 101.6 x 4 cm

Lowghost series is a phonetic play on "logos" (Greek for "truth" or "word"). Ghostly figures recurring in the lower part of the work echo the term "word" in a picturesque way and express the artist's long-standing belief that realization of truth or artistic inspiration suddenly appears like a ghost. The blue lump in the upper left corner of the work is a full one can of spray paint, first sprayed by the artist then hardened. This "1 Spray Can" work was first introduced by American conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner, who first attempted to show the both language and the materials referred to, then borrowed and twisted by Stephen Prina. The artist borrows their methodology to deepen his investigation into words, language and things.



Egan Frantz, *Booklights*, 2016
 Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Simon Vogel

Egan Frantz
Booklights
 2016
 Heritage board, oak, motion activated LED and hardware
 6 parts; 5 x 120 x 36.4 cm / each

A sculptural work made up of six "lighting books" describes that enlightenment, or realizing the essence of things themselves is literally a happening of "a light suddenly turns on" with concise and intuitive visual language. In the exhibition, the piece connects two exhibition halls, reminding the anecdote of the artist that one day he suddenly became free to "just paint."



Egan Frantz, *Morning (after Kolbe)*, 2019
Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Jeffrey Sturges

Egan Frantz
Morning (after Kolbe)
2019
Synthetic polymer on canvas
200 x 136 cm

The painting describes the Barcelona Pavilion, the work of Mies van der Rohe, one of the most influential modern architects, and the sculpture *Der Morgen*, by German sculptor Georg Kolbe, which is placed in the garden of the pavilion with architecturally divided color fields and elegant curves. The bright and bold color field of the background, the balanced curve of the foreground, and the powerful red horizontal line that crosses the screen harmonize to present a simple yet serene beauty.



Egan Frantz, *Der*, 2021
Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Egan Frantz

Egan Frantz
Der
2021
Synthetic polymer on canvas
180 x 240 cm

“Der”, the title of the work and the element that composes the screen, can be read as “the” in German, or as a fragment of an English word, or even as a combination of meaningless characters. The dark lilac mass on the left side of the canvas is also seen in different shapes by each viewer. The artist intentionally leaves the elements uncertain, so that they are not fixed in a single meaning, but can be connected with various possible interpretations. The stability of the deep, rich green background also stands out.



Egan Frantz, *Supi*, 2021
Courtesy the Artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler Image © Egan Frantz

Egan Frantz
Supi
2021
Synthetic polymer on canvas
180 x 240 cm

“Supi” is a word that means “super” in German. The red, typography-like figure appearing in the center of the canvas looks like “supi” in cursive letters, or like an unknown Asian language, but it is actually a fake alphabet without any meaning created by the artist. The repetitive, black vertical line that fills the background, the vibrating green line that seeps out from below the black lines, and the lines extending from the dense yellow mass to the entire screen together create an almost music-like sense of rhythm.