

**Stephen Rosenthal**

*Notations*

**Opening Saturday 6 May 3-8 pm**

**6 May - 10 June 2023**

P420 is pleased to announce the opening on Saturday 6 May, at 3PM (with the artist present) of *No-notations*, the second solo exhibition of Stephen Rosenthal (Washington D.C., 1935) in the gallery. The show hung in the first room of the gallery features the latest pieces by the artist, canvases and works on paper made from 2019 to 2022.

Active since the late 1960s, after almost five decades of research on painting, during the course of the 2000s Stephen Rosenthal has created a series of works generically presented under the heading *Constellations*. These pieces were already shown in the solo exhibition *Islands, Archipelagoes, Constellations* held by P420 with the American artist in 2018. The act of painting is simply the first phase in the making of these works. Using rags and solvents, at a slow, meditative pace, Rosenthal removes his own brushstrokes and erases any recognizability of the canvas. He erases but does not eliminate everything. The artist's touch allows hints of color to survive, clusters of paint rounded by the repeated passage of the rag. These are only marks, faded memories. The work is thus produced by a process of successive, gradual and inexorable loss. Nevertheless, over the last few years something else has happened in his paintings. After the process of destruction, Rosenthal has begun to develop a new phase of reconstruction. His brush begins to make trails, his pencil writes, and one has the clear sensation that something is again being generated, to the point of balancing and perhaps even overwhelming the remaining traces of the previous phase. The works on paper and paintings in the exhibition, produced over the last 3-4 years, establish a forceful dialogue between the memory of what has been and the present life of what takes place.

Riccardo Venturi, whose critical essay accompanies the exhibition, goes back to Ad Reinhardt for a few but incisive words with which to describe Rosenthal's paintings: *More & more about less & less*. A phrase without a verb, a sort of bare-bones manifesto, which in spite of its Beckett-like terseness says more than many critical writings.

For Rosenthal, "making painting – Venturi continues – is simply a way of thinking, even when it pushes into a *liminal* territory, where addition (more & more) meets subtraction (less & less)."

Selected exhibitions: *E subito riprende il viaggio*, P420, Bologna, IT (2020); *Islands, Archipelagoes, Constellations. Works on canvas and paper 2006-2018*, P420, Bologna, IT (solo, 2018); *Senza Tema. Carta / Paper*, Studio La Città, Verona, IT (2018); Premio Lissone 2018, Desidero fare qualcosa di così bello come una tela vuota, MAC - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Lissone, IT (2018); *Stephen Rosenthal*, Margarete Roeder Gallery, New York, US (solo, 2016); *Feral Objects*, Creon Gallery, New York, US (2014); *Many things placed here and there*, the Vogel Collection at the Yale

University Art Gallery, New Haven, US (2013); Galerie Margarete Roeder, Cologne, DE (solo, 2013); Julian Preto Gallery, a survey, Minus Space, New York, US (2013); *Zero plus, The White Box*, New York, US (2013); Margarete Roeder Gallery, New York, US (solo, 2012); *Selected Paintings*, BLT Gallery, New York, US (solo, 2009); Margarete Roeder Gallery, New York, US (solo, 2008); Fred Wagemans, Beetsterzwaag, NL (2006); *Blobs, Wiggles and Dots*, The Work Space, New York, US (2002); Stark Gallery, New York, US (solo, 2001); Galerie Renate Schröder, Cologne, DE (solo, 2001); *Fifteen Years of Painting*, Stark Gallery, New York, US (2001); *Nebeneinander III*, Galerie Renate Schröder, Cologne, DE (2001).