

Galerie Greta Meert is currently showing new work by Robert Barry. “WORD LISTS” is Barry’s seventh solo exhibition with the gallery.

In the late 1960’s Barry was a member of the so-called conceptual artists group. At this time he abandoned painting and instead worked with invisible material such as electromagnetic energy, ultrasonic radiation and inert gases. From 1969 Barry showed a series of works composed of words, drawn on sheets of paper, spoken on tape, projected as slides and imprinted directly on walls.

Rather than analytical or critical language, or part of a text, these words are used individually for their capability to suggest impressions a work of art can engender. They work through insinuation and they address a multiplicity of senses that involve associations with the architectural or psychological context in which they are meant to evoke.

« I use words because they speak out to the viewer. Words come from us. We can relate to them. they bridge the gap between the viewer and the piece. » (Robert Barry) Words are essential elements in Barry’s work. They evoke in the viewer a state of contemplation and personal experience.

In the present exhibition the artist utilizes the walls and both floors of the two gallery spaces to show the individual word-based works that play with proportion and scale, both real and metaphorical.

On the first floor, a multi-colored floorpiece unfolds using the entire length of the gallery floor. The words may appear colorful and playful, and yet remain formally engaged in the space. Also on this floor is “Blue Cross”, a painting from 2009.

On the second floor our attention is immediately attracted by a bright yellow circular floorpiece that almost occupies half of the gallery floor. On the walls; “Silver Word List” reflecting the light with silver chrome words; “Reds Cross”, with bright red words; and “Multicolored Word List” with multi-colored words painted directly on the wall. There is also a large grey painting with multi-colored words down the center. Several new works on paper are also on display.

Robert Barry’s work is included in the permanent collections of many museums and foundations, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), the Musée d’Orsay (Paris), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), and the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC).

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