

Blum & Poe is pleased to present our fifth solo exhibition of work by Mark Grotjahn. The exhibition is entitled, “Seven Faces” and will include up to twelve new paintings from Grotjahn’s “face” series.

Visually reminiscent of Picasso, Grotjahn’s “face” paintings intermingle abstract and figurative renderings while dismantling and building on the conventions of modern and contemporary painting. Using sheets of cardboard that are primed and mounted on linen as the ground, Grotjahn employs brush and palette knife to extensively build layer upon layer of oil paint to almost sculptural ends. Working in varying scales, combinations of texture, lines, color and abstracted geometric shapes develop into representational eyes and noses that are broken down, multiplied, and rearranged, fracturing any fixed perspective. Other paintings possess networks of expressive lines formed strictly with a palette knife and rest on the verge of non-objective abstraction. Both the gestural and literal carvings cut up the painting and further adds to the tension between illusionistic space and the reality of the paintings’ physical surface. The seemingly idiosyncratic “face” paintings are like their counterparts, his abstract and systematic perspectival-based “butterfly” paintings, simultaneously mimetic and expressive, but arrive at this balance in reverse order. These new ritualistically repetitive and intensely textured paintings point to Grotjahn’s implicit observations of and evolution in the practice of painting.

Mark Grotjahn has exhibited widely internationally, a selection of venues includes the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2008); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2008, 2006, and 2005); the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2008 and 2005); Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland (2007); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2007), and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2006). Grotjahn belongs to numerous public collections, such as the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Walker Art Center; Minneapolis, MN; Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Grotjahn was included in the 54th Carnegie International in 2004 and the Whitney Biennial in 2006. Mark Grotjahn lives and works in Los Angeles.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be produced on the occasion of this exhibition.

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