

GYÖRGY KEPES/CAMERON MARTIN

November 21, 2019 – January 18, 2020

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present an exhibition of works by György Kepes and Brooklyn-based artist Cameron Martin, on view from November 21, 2019 through January 18, 2020. Each photographic work by Kepes was selected by Martin with careful consideration of how it could directly engage with his current paintings. Together, the work of the two artists introduces a dialogue between historical and contemporary conditions for image production and illumination.

Designer and art theorist György Kepes was primarily concerned with the production of light as the integral conduit of visual information. Kepes considered light the “life-giving basis for any existence” and sought to integrate applied science and photographic technology into Modernist design practices. Eschewing the use of a camera, Kepes’ “photogenics” were developed by arranging and exposing a variety of everyday objects—including leaves, stones and fragments of newspapers—upon photographic paper. By directly manipulating the nuanced interplay of light and shadow, Kepes emphasized the photographic potential to generate new, distinct spaces of visual perception beyond the lens of a camera.

In conversation with György Kepes’ photograms are a series of non-objective paintings by Cameron Martin. Martin’s recent paintings share an experimental approach with Kepes’ photographs, and represent a turn in his work from the layered monochromatic landscapes of his early career. Overlapping and undulating transparencies, patterns and geometries are meticulously applied to the canvas using techniques that complicate the distinction between the handmade and the mechanical, and at times flirt with representation. Utilizing a vivid chromatic palette, Martin’s dynamic paintings occupy a new, hybrid, visual system, negotiating methodical and improvisational approaches to composition while applying contemporary strategies of image generation.

From different historical vantage points, the works of György Kepes and Cameron Martin contemplate the generative potential of light, even in its non-representational forms. While Kepes’ images were born from a subversive manipulation of photographic light, Martin’s paintings contend with the ubiquity of the light produced by LCD displays. Exhibiting Kepes’ and Martin’s work in tandem reflects on the possibilities and implications of image-making, from the Modernist movement of the early twentieth century to our deeply digitized present.

György Kepes was born in 1906, in Selyp, Hungary, and studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. In 1930, Kepes moved to Berlin and studied design and film under Laszlo Moholy-Nagy before immigrating to the United States in 1937. He taught at the New Bauhaus at The School of Design in Chicago, and Brooklyn College, before transferring to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and founding the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS). Kepes served as the Director of CAVS until his retirement and 1974, and was the only visual artist of MIT’s faculty to have been awarded the rank of MIT Institute Professor. Kepes passed away on December 29, 2001, in Cambridge, MA.

Cameron Martin (b. 1970, Seattle, WA) received his BA from Brown University (1994) and continued his studies at the Whitney Independent Study Program (1996). He has exhibited at venues including the Whitney Museum, St Louis Art Museum, Columbus Museum of Art, City Gallery (Wellington, New Zealand), and Tel Aviv Museum. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum, Albright-Knox Gallery, Minneapolis Institute of Art, and Saint Louis Art Museum, among others. Martin is recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2010), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship (2008), and the Artists at Giverny Fellowship and Residency (2001). Martin is Co-Chair of the Painting Department at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

WILLIAM CORDOVA	JAN. 23 – FEB. 29, 2020
JOSEPHINE HALVORSON	JAN. 23 – FEB. 29, 2020

UPCOMING ART FAIRS:

ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH	DEC. 5 – 8, 2019
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