

LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

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Stephen Mueller

Selected works 2007-2011

October 26-December 22, 2012

Tuesday-Saturday 10-6

Opening reception Friday, October 26, 6-8 pm

For additional information, please contact Kathleen Mallaney at 212 941 0012, kathleen@lennonweinberg.com.



This is the gallery's second exhibition of Stephen Mueller's work and the first to take place since his death on September 16, 2011 at the age of sixty-three. He painted brilliantly during the last year of his life even as he confronted the challenges of health problems and medical treatment. We have placed a selection of these works in the context of a five-year period during which he made sublime paintings for which he will always be remembered. This period, from 2007 to 2011, also spans the time frame of the gallery's working relationship with Stephen.

Painted in 2007, *Protogonos* was included in a group show that took place here that year. It's an engaging and kind of funny painting, its plaid and bug-eyed anthropomorphic form floating in a galactic drift. *Euterpe*, 2008, conjures a similarly vast space and an air of planetary motion but the central form here is circular and was painted while Mueller was working on a series of mandalas. Like the mandala paintings, *The Pass*, 2009, is a generally symmetrical work, flattened by the pressure of the abutting and overlapping shapes that Mueller allows to wander ever so slightly off pattern. The expertise of his eye is evident in the skewed stripes of two opposing ovals.

Shu, 2010, is named for an Egyptian god whose role was to separate the sky from the earth and is a fitting title for a painting in which a receding blue circle is crowned by a colored fan that snaps the painting taut to the surface. *Solange*, 2010, glows from within a transparent golden aura that surrounds its white-hot center.

The exhibition includes four paintings from 2011, all of which show Mueller making finely nuanced adjustments to the elements of his compositions, most particularly to the paint handling. There is a looser and more improvisatory quality present, particularly in *Mr. Meltemi* and *Bhimsen*. The scallop-shaped edges, the transitions between hard and soft boundaries, and between colors, have a freshness and fluidity that bring these paintings exceptionally close in feeling to his gorgeous watercolors. *Kami* is a knockout painting that takes on the relationships between figure and ground, flatness and depth in a way that suggests something about the paintings that might have come after. *Kabir* is simply revelatory, as filled with wisdom and wonder as a painting can be.

Stephen Mueller was born in 1947. His undergraduate and graduate studies took place at the University of Texas, Austin and Bennington College, where there was an emphasis on color field painting. He had already had his first solo exhibition in New York by the time he graduated in 1971, and there have been nearly fifty more since then in wide-ranging cities such as New York, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Washington, Berlin, Basel and London. A survey exhibition was presented at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska in 2003 and his work was featured in the American Academy Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts in 2011. His works are included in many museum collections including the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Whitney Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Denver Art Museum, the Birmingham Museum of Art and the Munson Williams Proctor. He received grants and awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment and the Gottlieb Foundation. He received a Guggenheim fellowship in 2000.