

press release

WAYNE GONZALES

12 March 2010 - 17 April 2010

Private View Thursday 11 March 2010, 6 - 8pm

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by American painter Wayne Gonzales.

Returning to the gallery for his second solo exhibition, Gonzales presents an innovative group of new paintings composed of both abstract and figurative work. Contemplative, evocative and mysterious, the work uses a rigorous formal structure to mine the processes of painting and perception. With this new body of work the artist draws parallels between the figurative and the abstract and suggests that the distinction may not be so fixed and rigid. Rather, the artist proposes two manifestations of the same reality, two parts of the same, larger whole.

Like Gonzales's earlier crowd scenes, the figurative paintings are based on anonymous source photographs. However, the mood has now shifted; here, the crowds are thinner and the brushstrokes are looser and more urgent. The palette of earthy browns and the soft focus give the sense of peering through a cloud of dust or smoke. The works play with scale to great effect; from afar, an image crystallises and can be viewed as a whole. However, up close, the figures break down into painterly brushstrokes and small gestures.

The abstract works also engage with the idea of scale, albeit to different effect. Following a consistent and repeated structure, each painting is determined by a grid of white orbs surrounded by concentric bands that become darker in graduating tones of grey through to black. Appearing to hover inside the canvas, the bright white orbs float on the ground, almost glowing, or become more pronounced, the distinct rings crisp and clear, depending on viewing distance. The technique is mechanised and devoid of gesture. We are left with light and its absence.

Gonzales's grid compositions are tightly structured, but the effect on the viewer's eye is a highly fluid and evocative visual experience that differs from viewer to viewer. This effect calls to mind the blinding spotlights on a film set, threatening searchlights roaming the streets, or the sun's after-image on the back of your eyelids. From up close the concentric striations may recall images of sound waves or topographical maps. A stark white glow can evoke the sense of a godly presence, or the moment before passing into the afterlife.

The work in the exhibition moves between two states, shifting from solid material being into a ghostly intangibility, and back again. In fact, it relies on the viewer to initiate this movement and to imbue it with meaning. Refuting any tangible reading, the artist asks us to interpret our own response to these mute but highly charged images.

Wayne Gonzales (b. 1957, New Orleans) lives and works in New York City. Recent solo exhibitions include: Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (2009); Seomi Gallery, Seoul (2008) and Patrick de Brock Gallery, Knokke, Belgium (2008). Recent group exhibitions include: *Every Revolution is a Roll of the Dice*, curated by Bob Nickas, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (2009); *Reflections*, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago (2008); *Say Goodbye to...*, The Clifford Gallery at Colgate University, Hamilton NY (2009); *Empires and Environments*, The Rose Art Museum, Waltham MA (2008).

Forthcoming exhibition: **Tom Friedman & Steve Wolfe** 22 April - 29 May, 2010
Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 6pm and Saturday, 11am - 5pm
For further details please contact Alice Walters on +44 (0)20 7494 1434