

MARC SELWYN FINE ART

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Bob Law, one of the lone innovators of conceptual and minimal practices in 20th Century British art. Works in the exhibition will include the artist's early Field drawings, large-scale paintings from the 1960's, subtle monochromatic works from the 1970's, and the geometric Castle imagery of his later career.

Law began work as an artist in the late 1950's when he moved to St Ives. Inspired by the landscape and orienting himself toward the sky, Law sought to find his psychological, spiritual and physical place in the world through his art. As the artist recounted to Richard Cork in 1974:

"The early Field drawings were about the position of myself on the face of the earth and the environmental conditions around me: the position of the sun, the moon and the stars, the direction of the wind, the way in which the trees grew, an awareness of nature's elements, awareness of nature itself and my position in nature on earth in a particular position in time. I was finding myself, and the map that went with myself..."

While the Field drawings, with their simplified, almost hieroglyphic imagery, were rejections of his earlier conventionally drawn figurative landscapes, Law went even further as his work progressed. Focusing on the visual field of his drawings, their boundaries and their ability to frame the world around him, Law stripped away all figurative content and focused instead on the void—"the ghostly, emptied out theater of white nothingness"* outlined by his irregular, hand drawn lines. "These deceptively simple rectangles would come to be the definitive gestures of what were known as his "open" drawings...an open window onto the world; open ended meaning; open to interpretation; open for business." (Douglas Fogle, *Field Works 1959-1999*)

Law's "closed drawings" and black paintings, filled with dense crosshatched lines or monochrome coats of dark acrylic paint, were the counterpoint to this "nothingness". A series of large scale paintings titled "Mr. Paranoia" mimicked the grandeur of contemporaneous color field works and reflected the uncertainty surrounding the fate of painting and anxiety about its legitimacy in the 1960's. The later Castle drawings return to more figurative, content-based imagery but are rigorously consistent with the tenets of Law's practice. The simplified blocks of white or primary colors representing the castle morph only slightly with each iteration. In a pursuit that recalls the work of On Kawara in the way it reaffirms life and marks time, Law records the date below each version, capturing a moment in the progression of the artist's life.

While Law's *oeuvre* can be broken into various categories and media, the absolute integrity of his search for meaning in the contrast between light and darkness, the opposition of human existence and the void, and the wonders of perception, never wavers.