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Paul Behnke: An Awful Rainbow

April 18-May 18, 2013

Artist Reception, Thursday, April 18, 6:00-8:00pm

New York, NY—March 21, 2013—Kathryn Markel Fine Arts is thrilled to present *An Awful Rainbow*, an exhibition of new work by abstract painter, **Paul Behnke**.

“[Paul] Behnke’s paintings are capable of igniting the viewer’s imagination, setting it off in an unforeseen direction.”

- John Yau, *A Theatre of Color*, 2012



d'Artagnan, 2013 Acrylic on canvas

Inspired by an 1820 poem by English poet John Keats, which reads “Do not all charms fly/ At the mere touch of cold philosophy?! There was an awful rainbow once in heaven/we know her ... texture;” Paul Behnke’s latest work is, first and foremost, an exercise in color. Behnke uses pure, unadulterated color—straight from the tube—to create dynamic experimentations of form. The paintings require of his viewers deeper contemplation, so that they may move past the immediate appeal of highly saturated color and on to the complexity of the relationships of the forms contained therein. Only then do these forms begin to reveal their true nature; they seem to compete with one another, and to jostle for place in the limited space of the canvas.

Behnke’s work, similar to that of the German Expressionists he counts among his influences, is gestural, yet hard edged. He works spontaneously, almost recklessly, laying down marks, which may then be completely covered over so that they may later divulge their true forms under layers of nearly translucent color. Each painting exhibited is painted on a square canvas so that the picture as an object can be neither forgotten nor denied. Rectangular canvases, Behnke explains, “allude more to a ‘painting’ with connotations of a landscape or a portrait,” which ultimately would detract from the pure objective quality an artistic feeling he works to capture in acrylic paints.

An active member of the Bushwick arts community, where he maintains a studio, Behnke was born in Memphis, TN and graduated with a Bachelors degree in painting from the Memphis College of Art. Behnke has exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Additionally, he is the author of *Structure and Imagery*, a contemporary arts blog.

Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, Chelsea is located at 529 W. 20th St., Ste. 6W, New York, NY 10011

Gallery Hours are Tues.-Fri. 10:00am-6:00pm, Sat. 11:00am-6:00pm

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