

GALERIE LELONG

528 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10001
T. 212.315.0470
F. 212.262.0624
art@galerielelong.com

13 rue de Téhéran 75008 Paris
Rämistrasse 7 8001 Zürich

Catherine Lee

Quanta

March 22 – April 28, 2012

opening reception: Thursday, March 22, 6-8pm

Marking the passage of time through vigorous, repetitive brushstrokes, Catherine Lee's *Quanta* Paintings recall her grid-like *Mark* Paintings from the late 1970s with new sensual surfaces. Over the last three decades Lee has focused on sculpture, but painting and serialization are threads that continue to run throughout her work. Complementing the *Quanta* series is *Alice*, Lee's monumental wall sculpture comprised of ceramic forms. *Quanta* opens to the public at Galerie Lelong on Thursday, March 22, from 6 to 8pm. The artist will be present.

The exhibition and series' title, *Quanta*, takes its name from the physics term that refers to a discrete quantity of radiant energy. Each individual square on the canvas's grid releases its own unit of light and color, resulting in an overall dynamism. In *Tottenheads (Quanta #5)* (2011), Prussian blue peeks out from under the foreground of supple squares of cadmium red, thrusting the red towards the viewer. Lee sees painting as a ritual act and each square on the canvas as binding a relationship between her and the individual painting. The titles are often drawn from the artist's own poetry, adding another personal element to the work.

Lee begins a *Quanta* painting by drawing a grid onto the canvas in pencil. Over several days, the artist completely fills a layer of squares with a single mixed color, lets it dry, and continues layering until the painting is resolved. Some paintings are multi-layered like *Brick Black Blue Black (Quanta #6)* (2011), a few are reduced to one plane like *Prussia (Quanta #3)* (2011), but most *Quanta* paintings have two layers of differing hues such as *Chocolate Cadmium (Quanta #21)* (2012). One of the parameters Lee set for herself in this series was that "the colors should create a duet of sorts, very clear and clean, a kind of two-part harmony."

Prior to starting the *Quanta* series in 2010, Lee created the wall sculpture *Alice* (2009-2010) composed of 105 red glazed raku ceramic units of similar size and form. Roughly shaped like human hearts or shields, these objects are a tribute to the artist's mother whose name is embedded along the edge of the first object. The rest bear the names of *Alice*'s family members and places she has lived. Hung in Lee's typical uniform grid, *Alice* exemplifies her interest in creating comparable works with slight but telling variations that are only revealed through reiteration. Although *Alice* is not a part of the *Quanta* series, the work demonstrates the natural transformation from serial sculptures in vibrant hues to similarly repetitive and expressive paintings.

Quanta is Lee's sixth solo exhibition at Galerie Lelong. In 2011, Lee presented monographic exhibitions at the Keramik Museum Westerwald, Höhr-Grenzhausen, Germany and the Kunsthaus Wiesbaden, Germany, as well as a dual exhibition at the University of Texas at San Antonio Satellite Space. Her work can be found in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Cleveland Museum of Art; Austin Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. This summer, an association of five museums in Texas will present concurrent exhibitions of Lee's oeuvre, including The Grace Museum, Abilene; the Old Jail Art Center, Albany; Museum of the Southwest, Midland; Ellen Noël Art Museum, Odessa; and San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo. Catherine Lee lives and works in Texas.