

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

William McKeown

November 4, 2021 – January 8, 2022

Casey Kaplan is pleased to present an exhibition in Gallery II of twenty-two abstract paintings by the late artist, William McKeown (1962 – 2011). This exhibition is the gallery's first with McKeown, and his New York solo debut.

Born in 1962 in County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, McKeown developed a body of work in which the qualities of light, at a certain time of day, hover as subjects behind his paintings' luminous surfaces. Originally trained in textiles before devoting himself to painting, McKeown's knowledge of craft remained crucial to the development of his work – not only in his prominent use of unprimed linen to create his canvases, but in the meticulous way in which he built up his paintings with countless layers of color washes, allowing them to emerge slowly like fabric from a loom.

Demanding the viewer to slow down and to contemplate, McKeown's paintings, comprised by marks and gestures dispersed across largely monochromatic planes of color, have an affinity for the artworks of Agnes Martin, Mark Rothko, and Howard Hodgkin.

Powdery greys, burnt oranges, buttercup yellows, and smoggy browns seep out towards the margins of McKeown's canvases like views through a window. Vivid snapshots of moments in time fading into their limits, the paintings appear like sunsets defined by tentative black lines, recalling the frames of photographic negatives.

McKeown's paintings are about the size of a person's chest, with a softly arched curve giving depth, almost like the ribs around the lungs on an x-ray. There is a sense of movement, of breathing, of ripples spreading in a pool of water, of peering into a deep well. Painted mostly in the mornings in a single application, the oil paint is flouted on, and sinks in completely, leaving a dry matt surface, structured only by the woven texture of the linen.

I see them as a representation of particular skies and moments that are inside. It's that moment when you lose a sense of your own containment, in order to absorb or be absorbed by a particular place or experience.

My work is not about nature. It is about a response to a particular type of space. A space where there are no rules, no morals, no laws, no judgements, no systems. A space that is unconditional, all embracing and free. This space, of course, is found in nature but it can also be in someone's eyes.

—William McKeown

Selected exhibitions include: The Extended Mind, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland (Group, 2019- 20); Shadowplay, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, (Group, 2019); Dayroom, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA, (Solo, 2016); Chance Encounters II, with John Ward at the LOEWE Miami Design District, USA, (Two-person, 2016–17); We are the Center for Curatorial Studies, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, USA, (Group, 2016); Passages in Modern Art: 1946–1996, Dallas Museum of Art, USA, (Group, 2016); The Untold Want, Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, Ireland, (Solo, 2015); Lismore Castle Arts, Co. Waterford, Ireland, (Solo, 2013); Inverleith House, Edinburgh, Scotland, (Solo, 2012); The Waiting Room, Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane, Ireland, (Solo, 2011); A Certain Distance, Endless Light, with Félix González-Torres, Middlesbrough Museum of Modern Art, UK, (Two-person, 2010); Pool with Dorothy Cross, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (Two-person, 2010); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, (2008); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, (Solo, 2004, 2001) and The Room at the Horizon, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Ireland (Solo, 2003). In 2005, McKeown represented Northern Ireland in the 51st Venice Biennale. McKeown's works is represented in the collections of Dallas Museum of Art; Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane; National Gallery of Ireland; Irish Museum of Modern Art; The Ulster Museum; Arts Council of England and the Arts Council of Ireland.