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INFO@RODOLPHEJANSSEN.COM – WWW.RODOLPHEJANSSEN.COM

Chris Martin

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In 2005, the Brooklyn Rail published Chris Martin's essay *Buddhism, Landscape, and the Absolute Truth about Abstract Painting*. It begins with a journey through Nevada: One day, while high on mescaline, Martin's friends Peter Acheson and Chris Keeny stuff dirt into pillowcases and pile rocks into their van, believing the earth to be covered in red jewels. To this memory, Martin wrote,

"Abstract painting is the dirt that catches the sun. You can't hold on to it. Paintings are not facts—they are invitations to the dance."

The unmediated, fleeting spontaneity evoked in this passage re-emerges here in Brussels with Chris Martin's decision to hang his paintings both in and outside the gallery walls for his second solo exhibition at Galerie Rodolphe Janssen. Like one's first glimpses of the open ocean or an endless desert road, Martin provides his works the freedom to attain fresh meaning, to add mystery to the practiced logic of advertising images that otherwise clog public spaces.

Painting exists in the present, in unrestricted movement. It doesn't demand meaning, nor must it turn in on itself to find meaning, but exists as part of the world we live in—even while straddling other realms of consciousness. Martin's paintings search for energies in the vein of Piet Mondriaan, and Helmut Federle, and Agnes Martin, always attempting to move beyond the confines of the picture plane.

Martin works with an ever-expanding vocabulary of images, frequently introducing materials that are foreign to painting—news-paper clippings, vinyl records, pillows, photographs, glitter—to his canvases. Curious and visually arresting, these materials nevertheless have their roots in vernacular forms of expression, harkening to a world beyond the orthodoxy of abstract painting. Here, Martin calls for immediate dialogue with his paintings' shimmering surfaces, bright vertical spaces, and familiar figures.

We live in an attention economy, one in which an overabundance of images constantly vie to be noticed, made sense of. But here's the thing: the images we stop to pay attention to and to build narratives from are the ones that catch us off guard, the ones that seem to resist categorization but nevertheless seek our interpretation.

About the artist

Chris Martin (b. 1954, Washington D.C) lives and works in Brooklyn. He will have a solo exhibition at Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin in October 2015, and has had recent solo exhibitions at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York; Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY; KOW, Berlin; and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf. Martin has recently participated in group exhibitions at Gavin Brown Enterprise, New York; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and the Nationalmuseum, Berlin.