

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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LUCIO FONTANA: *Paintings 1956-1968*
ROBERT BECK and DONALD MOFFETT: *RANGE – a collaborative work from 1997*

March 9 – May 15, 2010

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present for its inaugural exhibitions at our new uptown space a selection of works by Lucio Fontana and a collaborative work by Robert Beck* and Donald Moffett.

Born in 1899, Lucio Fontana was the founder of “Spazialismo” (Spatialist Movement). Through the discourse of several manifestos and his artwork Fontana explored the representation of the concept of space and new technology. The physical culmination of these concepts was manifested in his most famous series “Concetti Spaziali” which he began in 1948. Through punctures and slashes he sought to introduce a third dimension in his canvases. This exhibition brings together 8 iconic works installed throughout 3 floors of our historical townhouse space. From a 1956 “pietro” work, which includes small embedded stones with punctures, to the iconic monochromatic single slash works of 1968, this exhibition also includes the artist’s baroquely styled metallic paintings, his subtle raw canvases and his fleshy gouged works. While Fontana’s work may have been founded in intellect, the work itself is far from clinical. The slashed, punctured and gouged surfaces are tactile and visceral with an inescapable corporeal quality.

This corporeal quality also resonates in the concurrent exhibition of Robert Beck and Donald Moffett. “Range,” is the product of a 1997 collaboration between Beck and Moffett, a sublime merging of the masculine and the feminine. During this period Beck was doing a series in which he shot a .22 caliber rifle through a standard Strathmore drawing pad. Moffett asked for one of these pads and disassembled it into 20 sheets including the front and back covers. He then embellished each of the gunpowder smudged holes with fudge, charcoal and in one case ink. Thematically the work of both Beck and Moffett is rife with political, social and sexual content interlaced with autobiography. While this collaboration does not shy away from these themes, it is a decidedly more meditative and personal work. Beck recalls creating this series with his father, going out in the field together and setting up the pad and shooting. Hunting, the buck, the trophy epitomize Masculinity. The gunshot evokes violence and wounds. Moffett appropriates this image with all its residue and content and adorns it to create intricate ornamented drawings. But lest the viewer think Moffett has merely elevated the gaping wound to an object of beauty, with a wink and a nod of signature irreverence and impishness, Moffett has constructed these beautiful designs out of fudge – the sweet sticky confection imbued with all of its own connotations of both delight and prurience. Beck’s and Moffett’s work, albeit through a different vocabulary and media, responded to the ethos of the 1980’s and 1990’s created by the AIDS crisis. “Range,” a onetime collaboration, generated an unexpected synergy resulting in a work that vibrates with anger, loss, delight, joy and fragile beauty.

A full color catalogue with an essay by Elizabeth Smith will be forthcoming for these two exhibitions.

*Robert Beck, now known as Robert Buck, changed his surname in 2008 using his identity as an artwork itself – commenting on subjectivity and the significance of the “Name-of-the-Father.”

Marianne Boesky Gallery uptown space is located at 118 East 64th Street, between Lexington and Park Avenues. Our hours are Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 6pm. For further information or images, please contact Serra Pradhan at 212.680.9889 or serra@marianneboeskygallery.com.