

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

www.marianneboeskygallery.com

TED STAMM

Works on Paper

May 7 – June 11, 2011

Opening Reception: May 7th, 6-8pm

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present its first exhibition of Ted Stamm with a Project show of works on paper. Stamm unexpectedly died at the age of 39 in 1984 and in the 12 years prior to his death, created a mature body of work that was at once responsive to the past, reflective of his time and telling of the future. There is an immediate impulse when viewing Stamm's work to focus solely on its surface minimalism. Yet as much as the work is about process and medium, glimpses of the artist's life, his passions and preoccupations, begin to reveal themselves in each geometric form and mark.

Drawing was a constant in Stamm's practice, the graphite lending itself to both tight precise lines and emotive scribbles. After 1972 black became the dominant color in his work, both as an artistic investigation and for its popular connotations of nonconformity and rebellion. In the former Stamm was exploring reductive elements of line and form abstraction whilst seeking the perfect Stamm black – a flat non-reflective shade. It was also a nod to artists whose process he admired, like Ad Reinhardt and Frank Stella. The earliest black works were dubbed "cancel" paintings by the artist and were created by Stamm literally covering the surface of his colorful poured abstractions with a grid of black paint. These more gestural forms would give way to a more pronounced line and geometry reflecting shapes that had struck Stamm in his daily environment. These shapes were given specific names with specific rules. "Woosters" were a combined rectangle and triangle shape derived from a form he had seen on Wooster Street. "Dodgers" were a semi-circle culminating in a tilted rectangle. Named for the Brooklyn Dodgers, the shape was possibly derived from the perimeter of a baseball field. "Zephyrs" referenced high speed trains, with a sleek elongated cross shape.

He was also an early experimenter with graffiti, discreetly stenciling his "Dodger" form on buildings that were meaningful to him and on subsequent visits adding to the work until its fourth stage when the final work was carefully documented. The "Tag Pieces" further attempted to merge his life and his art. The found tags were glued to identical sketch pads. Guests to his studio would be asked to mark the page as they wished and Stamm would respond with his own mark in the other sketchbook. The resulting work memorialized the implicit "collaboration".

Stamm remained true to the basic tenets of minimalism with a concern for space and the object, but injected his own interest in advancement and movement, reflecting his boyhood fascination with cars, trains and planes. Perhaps describing his own work best, Stamm said "it represents no beginning and no ending. This is my life."¹

Stamm's work is included in the collections of Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, and Western Australia Art Gallery, Perth, Australia.

Marianne Boesky Gallery is located at 509 West 24th Street, between 10th and 11th 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.

¹ Tiffany Bell, "Painting for the Future," in *Ted Stamm Painting Advance 1990*, Hillwood Art Gallery, Long Island University, C.W. Post Campus, February 5 – 28, 1986, p. 16.