

Robert motherwell open series essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A striking vibrancy gives the palpating its own personality. The color fields and lines have a strong narrative quality to them and immediately include the viewer in their dialogue. The manufactured colors of the lines juxtapose the organic ochre and emphasize every change in value and temperature. The stark, rigid, white line is a guideline for control-? it is premeditated and a product of rules. The black line on the other hand is informing itself and changing as it moves. The white line is illustrative, general and the black line is narrative and pacific.

The repetition of line and space give the painting a rhythm that is embodied in the painterly brushstrokes of the color field. This painting is a manifestation of two forces contrasting to a point that they are no longer in contention but support each other. The first contrast the viewer sees is the imposing scale of the work. Standing at 92 inches tall the viewer barely accepts it as his own world.

The lines are not large enough to be considered structural but also defy any ties to the preconception of a drawn line.

With this the lines become something else, in fact they become nothing else, and they simply are lines. The viewer struggles understanding a line of that scale because it negates relationships to any known lines. The field of color becomes a facade, but because it is confined to its inherent properties of being on a canvas, it feels trapped. The lines activate the surface and release the pressure by creating such a strong vibration that if anything moved a hair the whole equilibrium would fall out.

The painting's color field is full of history.

The viewer sees previous decisions and the multiple layers of color. The painting assumes an authority because it gives the sense of creation. However it transcends above human experience because for us to accept creation we need to understand origin.

The painting defies any rolling. It seems that the lines are creating shapes but at the same time we see that the shapes are informing the line. The viewer struggles that the lines are not acting like lines: they are not defining shapes they are simply being. This allows the negative space to become positive space and the whole canvas surface is now activated.

Robert Motherly Open Series By Swansea Motherless “ Open in Ochre” painting commands attention with its humbled authority. Its scale cannot be ignored as it stands on the line of the human experience and a higher power.

The work resolves an inner tension that it shares with the viewer; it extends itself beyond the individual without compromising its maintaining a soft approachability. In this sense it is a dichotomy that exists harmoniously. “ Open in Ochre” is consistent with Motherless “ Open” series in that it is line that activates a color field.

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