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LEAVES OF GLASS

WHERE ART & POP CULTURE COINCIDE WITH HISTORY & POLITICS

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

The Nothing That Is Not Here

["Far Away From Forest Sounds" (2009), fluid acrylic on panel. "Daphne Would Recite for Our Pleasure" (2009), fluid acrylic on wood panel. "Moments of Awakening" (2009), diptych, fluid acrylic on canvas.]

Myriad dialogues—with their inherent networks of influence and intention—come together as an ensemble in the colorful, abstract canvases of Ed Cohen. While Cohen's works reflect his intellectual and emotional life, they are a spiritual exploration. At "The Nothing That Is Not Here," the first solo show by Ed Cohen at Winston Wächter Fine Art, the artist veers between tension and joyful randomness imparted by his drip technique. While one finds evident order and control in these paintings, one—more importantly—steps into a spiritual dimension.

Yes, Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) is an obvious reference point, for Cohen: The latter works on the floor and drips paint from above. Yet Cohen's spiritual sources are as—if not more —important than his technical ones. Indeed, one can start with the importance of Buddhist philosophy (in general) and 17th century Enso paintings (in particular) upon Cohen's work. Cohen sees painting as an act of meditation in which the artist, his materials, and vision synthesize. Whether employing circles (the form used by Buddhist monks) or lines extending across canvases, Cohen's images approach the infinite and exude a mystery. The latter can be explored by

viewers beyond the artist's fluency in extending the reach of basic colors and adept handling of paint.

As the artist paints what is beyond words, it rests upon the viewer to transcend the music and spirit of an Ed Cohen painting. Within the Zen Buddhist frame of reference, the Enso is the circle of infinity, completion, and oneness. To those with that *weltanschauung*, the circle—in all its humbleness—conveys truth and even enlightenment itself. To look at Ed Cohen's paintings is a contemplative experience. Making the heart childlike is vital in Zen practice, and to look at the artist's images—particularly the circular ones—is to look into the potential heart in which various layers fall away to allow a "purer" view. The artist's works seduce with their simplicity, challenging efforts to deconstruct their deliberation. They welcome viewers into the process of absorbing these images in their authenticity. Each of his works is truly unique—organisms defying perfection while embracing actualization.

Cohen paints states of mind and emotion delving periodically into passion—allowing his viewers to capture moments apart from everyday life. His works invite one to ask existential questions about the world and struggle with unanswerable questions. Beyond this, their simple elements trigger internal, emotional, and visceral conversations with the viewer. However, these works are far from simple. Cohen's paintings—in their motifs and flatness—betray various complexities, organisms, and human imperatives with functions inspired by Abstract Expressionism's most luminous possibilities.

The Nothing That Is Not Here

By Ed Cohen

Through October 17, 2009

@ Winston Wächter Fine Art

530 West 25th Street, NYC 10001

www.winstonwachter.com

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