

# ACE GALLERY BEVERLY HILLS

I N S T I T U T E O F C O N T E M P O R A R Y A R T

9430 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD · BEVERLY HILLS · CALIFORNIA · 90212  
TEL 310.858.9090 · FAX 310.858.9091 · WWW.ACEGALLERY.NET

RELEASE

RELEASE

RELEASE

RELEASE

## GARY LANG

### *CIRCLES LINES GRIDS*

### *PAINTINGS*

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST: THURSDAY, JULY 16, 8-10 PM  
THROUGH AUGUST 29, 2009

Since the early 1980s, Lang has explored his Circles, Lines and Grid paintings which combine seemingly opposing elements: the rational and the emotional, the harmonic and the dissonant, and a high degree of controlled randomness.

Lang is deeply devoted to the physical act of painting: that creative period when he focuses exclusively on the subtle interaction of brush, hand, paint, and canvas. From a distance, all of his works appear to be precisely painted, almost machine-made, but up-close they are distinctly hand-made. In planning and executing the *Circle Paintings*, Lang first selects his palette and devises a chart to determine, or to use Lang's word "navigate", their sequence within the composition. "Once my chart is complete," Lang explains, "my colors are organized so that I no longer make decisions about color." Instead, he focuses intensely on applying paint to canvas—a process that can extend over many months on a given work.

Using charts, simple mathematical models, and logic at the preparatory stage thus frees Lang to be "hyper-present" when he begins to paint. The process also introduces a degree of chance and the unexpected into his works, which Lang relates to both musical compositions (especially the works of John Cage) and the sounds we hear everyday. When he was in his late teens, Lang began taping the random sounds he heard at home and while traveling. Seeking to depict in paint those indiscriminate passages of sound and silence, he invented numerous ways to introduce chance, lyricism, textures, and rhythms into his painting.

The tradition of circle paintings is indelibly linked to the symbolism of the circle itself. As a sign of perfection, unity, wholeness, infinity, and cosmic order among many other associations, circle paintings date from pre-historic times. The circular composition or *tondo* became common in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when artists (particularly

Botticelli and Raphael) utilized the shape to focus the viewer's attention on center. A number of important early 20th-century artists used circular supports to paint on or made complex compositions composed of abstract round shapes, among them was Sonia Delaunay the cofounder of the Orphism Art Movement who integrated strong colors and circles to reference modernist designs.

Since the 1950s, several notable artists have created works using concentric circles or circular canvases. These include Kenneth Noland's pioneering bull's-eyes (which examine the tense relationship between circular images and rectangular edges), Jasper Johns' famous *Targets* (painted on rectangular canvases between 1955-65), and Ugo Rondinone's spray-painted circles (made by studio assistants) dating from the mid-1990s. Round or other shaped canvases, are also associated with works created in New York in the 1960s when Hard-edge painters (Frank Stella foremost of all) sought to break away from traditional rectangular supports in an attempt to create more sculptural works that underscore pictorial flatness. Lang's concepts relate most closely to the marks and symbols that Paul Klee used in his paintings and drawings during the early 20th century, and the origins of trance works witnessed in the primal marks and geometry of Paleolithic sites in Europe and petroglyphs in California.

Lang's employment of graduated and dissonant colors that he grinds, mixes and catalogues in his studio, which contains countless jars of colors which are not available in art supply houses are his life-blood. He favors imperfect lines produced when painting free hand, rejects the use of rulers and tape, and has no studio assistants.

Born in Los Angeles in 1950, Lang attended the California Institute of the Arts. He received an MFA from Yale University in 1975, and then settled in New York City. Lang has had more than sixty solo exhibitions in the United States, Austria, France, Japan, The Netherlands, and Spain. He now lives and works in Los Angeles.

For further information and visuals please contact Jennifer Kellen, Director, Ace Gallery Beverly Hills  
310.858.9090 or email [jenniferkellen@acegallery.net](mailto:jenniferkellen@acegallery.net)  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM