

**Brian Calvin***Head*

December 10 – January 16, 2010

December 9, New York—A group of paintings by L.A.-based artist Brian Calvin, making a subtle turn from his previous work, will be on view for his third solo show at Anton Kern Gallery through January 16, 2010. After establishing himself as a painter of “pausing-as-an-activity,” Calvin now, in this new body of works entitled “Head,” concentrates on the face as a picture of the mind with the eyes being its interpreter. Noting the singular case of the title, the viewer has been tipped off about entering an exhibition concerned with a state of mind rather than portrait painting.



With a minimum of modeling of the facial features and backgrounds – achieving an almost Japanese allegorical flatness – the canvas is divided into clear shapes of sunlight-drenched colors, often exaggerating eyes and lips, revealing brushstrokes mainly for their chromatic values and occasionally for expressive accents. Eyelids are heavy under rainbows of eye-shadow, lips glossy and inviting, and sometimes, as if longing for that cooling drink, slightly split open revealing an orange, oblong-shaped tongue. It’s the eyes though, that are the most arresting in these new works, as if to say, once you look at me I will look back and not let go! Gazing at someone says much about the relation between the observer and the observed; and about the relations, between and among, the subjects of the gaze and about the circumstance of the gazing. Calvin remarks that he sits “with them...painting what seem like masks until they start to look back at me.” In this case then, one could even say that the gaze does not belong to the subject, the viewer, any longer, but, rather, to the object of the gaze, the painting.

Calvin as the painter of the contemplative life, of paintings in which the figure appears as the non-figurative, makes the act of looking the new narrative. This certainly demands more of the viewer since the paintings refuse to offer any additional narrative structure, but then a reward is offered, a glimpse at unrelenting beauty, tenderness, and the splendor of truth.

Calvin’s work has been shown in numerous solo exhibition in U.S. and European galleries, and was included in group shows such as *Electric Mud*, Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston, Houston (2009), *If Everybody Had an Ocean*, Tate St Ives in association with CAPC Musée d’Art Contemporain, Bordeaux (2007/2008), *After Cezanne*, LA MOCA, Los Angeles (2007), the *California Biennial*, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA (2004) and *Dear Painter, paint me...*, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, (2003).

Concurrently, Anton Kern Gallery will present new photographs by **Saul Fletcher** in the back room gallery.

Both exhibitions will open on Thursday, December 10 and run through Saturday, January 16, 2010. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm. For further details on the artist and the work, as well as for more images, please contact Anton Kern Gallery at (t) 212.367.9663, (f) 212.367.8135 or email: [info@antonkerngallery.com](mailto:info@antonkerngallery.com).

**Upcoming exhibitions: Anne Collier (January 21 – February 20, 2010)**

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