

## Press Release

Schema Projects 92 St Nicholas Ave Brooklyn NY 11237

### Lawrence Swan: Critical Masque

*“Where alchemy, through its symbols, is the spiritual Double of an operation which functions only on the level of real matter, the theatre must also be considered as the Double, not of this direct everyday reality...but of another archetypal and dangerous reality, a reality of which the Principles, like dolphins, once they have shown their heads, hurry to dive back into the obscurity of the deep.” – Antonin Artaud*

A foray in a field that is paper; some “fields” already vested with the strategies of others, a paper container. A white sheet of paper, folded and unfolded, division, retracing and outlining the structure of said. This is how Lawrence Swan begins a work.

From this point, markings are made that extract the hidden to the seen with differentiating hues, circles and lines. It’s as simple as that, but it’s not. Within the context of art objects these works are outliers, like our planets to our earth, our moons to same. These works often appear on humble support materials, lightweight low grade white paper or repurposed cardboard, materials ready at hand. This fact, identifies them as simple or elaborate scribbles or random computations clear only to the mind that directed them. Yet they are unifying in feeling, bigger than themselves. Monks illustrated manuscripts, that is to say, musings within the text of a story; the work of Lawrence Swan is both. For the most part, imagery here which Swan considers to be in the “figurative” tradition, appears geometric, uses abstract pattern in a loose mapping mode. There is the heartbeat of simultaneity at work in every direction and these works morph and pulse.

The “chance” operation he performs when he begins a new work (“ I fold a piece of paper...”) is key but unlike that of other modern artists like John Cage but could be seen to be related ideas that flow from the philosophy of Hermeticism. Hermeticists believed in a “*prisca theologia*, the doctrine that a single, true theology exists, that it exists in all religions, and that it was given by God to man in antiquity”. It teaches that when we seek the Divine, we best begin with the mysteries of nature such as those found in hidden geometries, one could say, and not unrelated to the act of folding and unfolding of paper that Swan uses as a departure point. It is a philosophy that encourages spiritual curiosity, which is the essence of an art making method without final goal or purpose. We owe the thread of this subjective, introverted, and at times magico-mystical aesthetic to the Romantic movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which is based on feeling and an expression of the sublime and which never really died out; and is in effect the root of a larger tree that branched out through the centuries. To this day, we still feel Romanticism’s original emphasis on the subjective, intuitive and sublime in all manner of spiritual, mystical, and occult art and literature, including the work of Symbolists, Dadaists, Surrealists, Abstract Expressionists, modern musicians and filmmakers, and beyond.

*“...for us, chance was the ‘unconscious mind’ that Freud had discovered in 1900...the adoption of chance had another purpose, a secret one. This was to restore to the work of art its primeval magic power and to find a way back to the immediacy it had lost through contact with... classicism.”*

Hans Richter, graphic artist and filmmaker who created some of the first abstract films.

What’s new here are the large format works building on Lawrence Swan’s well known smaller folded and torn paper works of a casual informal nature and the occasional appearance of a “masque” a theatre reference, which follows along these same Symbolist/Dada roots.

Schema Projects is proud to present these new works on paper by Lawrence Swan.

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