

PAUL JENKINS (b.1923) IN THE FIFTIES: SPACE, COLOR, AND LIGHT
Through April 14, 2007

February 14, 2007 D. Wigmore Fine Art, Inc. located at 22 East 76th Street, New York will open an exhibition of major oil paintings from 1955-1960 by Paul Jenkins selected from the artist's collection. In the 1950s, the prominent abstract expressionist Jenkins lived and worked in both New York and Paris which may have given him the objectivity and detachment he needed to develop his own personal style and philosophy with roots in both the New York School and the Paris Tachists.

In the 1950s oils Jenkins treated space in its dynamic totality, discarding recognizable subject matter, deep perspective, contained composition and established procedures of brush technique. Jenkins experimented in the 1940s with flowing inks and diluted watercolors over a studio sink, courting but still controlling accident to achieve non-static expression of color, line, and mass. By 1953 he worked on the floor, using a pouring method to control fluid movement, aid layering, create spatiality, and experiment with scale. By 1955 Jenkins was exploring many materials and different pigments, but always used a liquid binder that allowed pigments to flow and spread. Distinct from other artists who poured, Jenkins primed his canvas with a white undercoat for increased definition of form. By 1956 Jenkins had developed a personal calligraphy by drawing with white Chrysochrome enamel which supplied an additional source of light and provided a graphic counterpoint to the color in his paintings. The exhibition *Paul Jenkins, Space, Color and Light* will have thirteen oils from 1955 to 1958.

In late 1957 through 1959 Jenkins created about forty paintings titled *Eyes of the Dove*, two of which are in the exhibition. With a restricted format of 30 x 40 inches, Jenkins demonstrated that scale and size do not always relate. Where one painting might seem to contract and fold into itself, another might appear to expand beyond its boundaries. Many of these paintings were executed on unstretched canvas on the floor with paint applied in flows and rivulets to achieve a veiling result. With the *Eyes of the Dove* series, Jenkins moved away from his overall dense oils of 1953-1958.

An ivory Eskimo knife was added to Jenkins' arsenal of tools in 1958, which he used in the *Eyes of the Dove* paintings and then in the *Phenomena* paintings to control flow and make precise form designations. In late 1959, Jenkins began to title his canvases *Phenomena*, followed by a key phrase or word. As he said, "I try to find the identity word that will secure an attitude towards the painting rather than provoke a visual object that the eye will seek out." The exhibition will feature five of Jenkins' early *Phenomena* paintings in oil and enamel from 1959 and 1960.

Like Jackson Pollock, Paul Jenkins believed in the validity of invented technique. Pouring provided a persistent quality of fluidity, which invested his art with movement and progressive transitions. Jenkins defined the form he used to organize his composition during the act of painting; a process requiring a great deal of control. His dense and worked blacks serve as vehicles of movement, while his white undercoat of primer adds to the luminosity within these concentrated envelopments and fusions of oil. Jenkins' paintings are deliberate and guided with great concern for textural quality.

The exhibition catalogue contains an essay by Helen A. Harrison, Director of the Pollock-Krasner House, as well as 22 color reproductions. The exhibition will run through April 14, 2007.

D. Wigmore Fine Art, Inc. is located at 22 East 76th Street, New York, NY. The gallery is open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For further information, call (212) 794-2128 or visit the gallery's website at www.dwigmore.com.