

TIPPING THE BALANCE

**Works on Paper by Stephen Antonakos, Robert Kelly, Gloria Ortiz-Hernández & Joan Waltemath**

From October 3 through November 10, The Drawing Room is pleased to present, *Tipping the Balance* an exhibition of works on paper by Stephen Antonakos, Robert Kelly, Gloria Ortiz-Hernández and Joan Waltemath. This exhibition brings together four artists for whom drawing geometric relationships plays a central role in the creative process. Each artist will be showing a series of sequential abstract drawings that highlight their shared interest in mining a particular compositional inquiry in multiple permutations.

**Stephen Antonakos**, who divides his time between New York City and Sag Harbor, is represented with a set of four large, spare colored pencil drawings from the mid-1970 that comprise one work. These precisely drawn variations on the placement of an incomplete green circle on the white field of a page are an early record of Antonakos' extensive exploration of geometric forms, often transformed into neon tubes articulating architectural spaces. Stephen Antonakos's five-decade career is the subject of retrospective opening this week at The Allentown Art Museum in Pennsylvania that presents his signature neon wall installations and an impressive selection of his drawing oeuvre. The retrospective will be on view through January 11, 2009.

**Robert Kelly** is a New York artist whose compelling new gouache and tempera paintings on paper celebrate a looser approach to abstraction. The patina of the sheets that Kelly salvaged and reclaimed from a 1951 US Navy Atlas, imbues these small paintings with an inviting tactile quality. Here, watery media and minimal shapes converge in a series of new abstract geometric compositions where the weight of each band of color is carefully calibrated to achieve a satisfying sense of balance. The imagery conjures associations ranging from African textiles to the uplifting patterns of Sonia Delaunay's early 20<sup>th</sup> century abstractions.

**Gloria Ortiz-Hernández** will show two pairs of drawings from the *Day/Night and Uno y Medio* series. Ortiz-Hernández, who divides her time between Pennsylvania and New York, has developed a refined technique in graphite, pastel & powdered pigments that allows her to capture the evanescent presence of atmosphere and light in sequential geometric shapes on paper. In these series, two weighty rectangles occupy the foreground of each composition while a narrow central opening allows a shaft of light to infiltrate the darkness. Ortiz-Hernández notes that, "Starting at the darkest point where the drawing is most compact, a slow progressive diffusion extends the darkness out of the confines of the black and into the whiteness of the paper."

**Joan Waltemath** presents four mixed media works on paper that continue her investigation of harmonic ratios related to the proportions of the human torso. Created during her 2007 residency at the Kimmel Nelson Harding Center for the Arts in Nebraska City, each drawing is composed with an elaborate series of interlocking grids in nuanced whites and neutral grays punctuated with carefully calibrated touches of punchy color. Choosing to work on the skin-like surface of an Indian rag paper provided Waltemath with a sturdy ground on which to exploit the subtle shifts in color and surface reflectivity of the white casein, gouache, tempera further articulated with additional drawing media. Waltemath's move to New York after her childhood in the Great Plains of Nebraska was formative in her exploration of the potential for geometric forms to engage architectonic memories. She thinks of these drawings as reflecting portals through which viewers may cross thresholds into new spaces and experiences.

Gallery hours: Mon & Thurs-Sat, 11 to 5; Sun 11 to 4  
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