

T O T A H

BRIAN WILLS

Radium

March 29th - May 13th, 2023

TOTAH presents *Radium*, an exhibition of recent works by Brian Wills. *Radium* opens March 29th, 2023, and will be on view through May 13th. Wills last exhibited at TOTAH alongside Helen Pashgian for their 2017 show *Transient*. This is his first solo exhibition with the gallery, and in New York.

Working primarily with threads and using paint only sparingly, Los Angeles-based artist Brian Wills is known for his ingenuous geometric compositions whose color saturation is only visible from specific angles. His appeal to optical illusions, or optical stimulation, leads viewers to question the objectivity and stability of the realities they encounter every day. A frame is no longer a frame in Wills's work, but a portal guiding viewers into hidden vistas of textured surfaces and fluid variations.

Inspired by the Light and Space movement as much as Minimalism, the luminous sheen that enwraps his compositions dramatize the act of seeing. Often against a backdrop of International Klein Blue, Wills creates visual gaps that viewers have to fill in. As a result, colors readily saturate into different hues, snared on a lattice-like threadwork which absorbs light in a kind of phenomenological mist.

The variations in color that Wills captures rest on an interdependency of viewer and object, which makes his work less pictorial than process-bound and relational. Each composition can be considered a visual essay on the inner complexity of a medium that shows its own making. Scale is an essential ingredient in this. Viewers must move their body (up close, then far away) to see his paintings fully. This embodied movement, where zooming-in and zooming-out yields different information, showcases how painting has become almost secondary in regard to the relational experiences it prefigures.

Wills engages in a labor-intensive, manual process where painting itself is a metaphoric vehicle, synthesizing different planes of perception. Meticulous elaborations of detail are fundamental to his work, which is designed to upset the ritualistic ease by which we encounter objects in physical space. Exposing the DNA of an image, foregrounding a picture's graduated emergence as a gestalt, Wills recasts the act of painting as a process of gathering, where time enters into the materiality of line and pigment as a kind of glue. Each composition is an activity that recreates the sedimentation and compression of time, the overlap of matter and memory.

Brian Wills (b. 1970, Lexington, KY) is a multimedia artist whose work has been linked to California Light and Space, and exhibited alongside James Turrell, Peter Alexander, Robert Irwin, and Laddie John Dill. His paintings, consisting of densely woven, intersecting bands of color, give multiplied dimension to the picture plane. He received his BA from Denison University, his MA from Harvard University, and SSP from Harvard Law School. Wills' work has been exhibited at numerous venues including the Underground Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA; Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; Quint Gallery, La Jolla, CA; and OCHI, Sun Valley, ID and Los Angeles, CA. Wills' work is included in various public and private collections including The Jarl Mohn Family Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA; The Estee Lauder Collection, New York, NY; and Fundación / Colección Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico. Wills lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

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