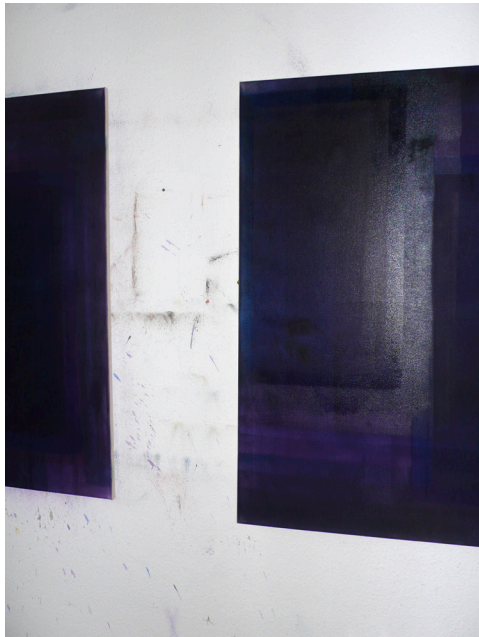


COUNTRY CLUB / LOS ANGELES
JAMES KRONE
THE WILDERNESS IS THE WITCHES LEASH
FEBRUARY 13 – APRIL 3, 2010
RECEPTION: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010 | 7–9PM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Country Club is pleased to present a new body of work by **James Krone**. *The Wilderness is the Witches Leash* features new sculptures and paintings from this Berlin-based artist.



James Krone, studio view, Berlin 2010.

JAMES KRONE'S BLACK PAINTINGS

The significance of the black monochrome painting to the narrative of modernism means that anybody making one now is, to some extent, qualifying an existing sign. It is the monolithic image of the 20th Century Avant-garde. James Krone's black paintings are not strictly black monochromes but a complex layering of violet, red and blue, which use color to comment on the received idea of the black painting. Imagine the history as a ground over which Krone rewrites.

Art & Language's Secret Painting, 1967-68, consists of two square canvases next to each other, one all black, the other all white but with a sentence printed on it announcing that which is unknowable in the content of the black canvas. It might be the first postmodern artwork, the text a conceptualist tool qualifying the inherited pretensions of the Black Square. Krone's black paintings unite the transcendental image with the disillusioned postmodern commentary. Their serial format comprehends the process of reproduction, which is one essential template for art's

commodification. The paintings are simultaneously unique and reproduced, modernist and postmodernist, nostalgic and futuristic, archly serious and tongue-in-cheek.

Krone's paintings are shadowed by a range of definitive modernist strategies. That they overlap in his paintings is a sign of the distance the series keeps from its antecedents. There is Frank Stella's workaday application of paint in stripes of a regular modulated width, avoiding expressionistic facture. There is the generic modernist hang of a sequence of equal-sized rectangles. There are the formalistic geometries of Krone's composition that derive, self-reflexively, from the shape of the support. There is the minimalistic repetition of that composition which implicitly denies invention and originality. These strategies carry over something of the categorical aura of their sources, the sense that each originally presented itself as the only possible solution to a problem. Krone's transformation is to blend them all simultaneously into structures that are non-hierarchical.

Black paintings are always driving towards the ultimate darkness, the undifferentiated surface; the total black that brooks no contradictions and absorbs all light. A plane that is both all opaque and all transparent. They speak a language of binaries and polarities. Krone's black paintings are skeletons of that ultimate all-over black plane, as Brice Marden described his later gestural paintings as the skeletons of his earlier monochromes. They diagrammatically project a process which would produce the all-over black painting if it were followed to its logical extreme, but they hold off and allow the results to function as questioning projections of the potentiality of an absolute statement.

Mark Prince
Berlin, January 2010

James Krone (b. 1975 in Chicago) works in Berlin and Los Angeles. This is his first solo show at Country Club and his third solo show in Los Angeles. His work has previously been exhibited at venues in Europe and America including Circus Gallery in Los Angeles, Gallery Gerersdorfer in Vienna, Co-Lab in Copenhagen, JMOCA in Los Angeles and Schalter in Berlin. He received his BFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago in 1998 and attended the Mountain School of Arts.



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