

PRESS RELEASE

STEVEN PARRINO

15 February – April 4, 2008

“Radicality comes from context and not necessarily form. The forms are radical in memory, by way of continuing the once radical, through extensions of its history. The avant-garde leaves a wake and, through mannerist force, continues forward. Even on the run, we sometime look over our shoulders, approaching art with intuition rather than strategy. Art of this kind is more cult than culture”.

Steven Parrino

For close to three decades, the work of Steven Parrino (1958-2005) has represented a vital link to the (supposedly obsolete) idea of “radicality.” Back in the early eighties, when the word on the street pronounced painting dead, rather than join the flock of mourners, Parrino took a shot at necrophilia. In his hands, appropriationist strategies became a kind of black ops technique, a means to convulsively incarnate the historical breakdown of avant-gardes narratives. Not to provide a distanced, critically laden image of ideological collapse, but to produce a raw, visual materialization of its effects. Neither nostalgic nor cynical, his “misshapen” and gutted monochrome paintings, performance-based films, photo-collages and works on paper made with such loaded materials as engine enamel, blood and glitter, owe more to Stella’s Black Paintings’ “what you see is what you see” credo than to any post-pop tradition of cultural intervention. And just not any Frank Stella’s Black Paintings; but specifically: ARBEIT MACHT FREI (1958) and DIE FAHNE HOCH (1959). As far as Parrino was concerned, these works were not called “black” for nothing... This exhibition will include various works on paper as well as a selection of the artist’s large shaped and “misshaped” canvasses— monochrome paintings wrenched from their stretchers, before being stretched back, distorted, in a supremely frozen gesture, suggesting, in Robert Nickas’ words, “the crumpled body of a car after an accident (...) a clear sign of violence being served cold.”

The gallery is open from Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.