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Part to Whole: work by Li Trincere and Ken Weathersby
November 7 - 22, 2015
Opening: Saturday, November 7, 2 - 4 pm
Curated by Karen Schifano

Part to Whole

At first glance, the work of these two artists seems to have very little in common.

Li Trincere's powerful and intensely colored, shaped canvases exist as charged objects that feel iconic and yet also contingent. The inner organization, formed of colored shapes, serves to structure and energize the painting shape by reversing the arrow directionality of its outer profile. We sense a greater whole, but the divisions seem to also break this whole apart from the inside. Trincere's work seems to issue from some pre-verbal place and yet it is also articulate, accessible and intensely present.

The collaged and deconstructed wall pieces by Ken Weathersby are, on the other hand, usually neutral in color or black and white, sometimes with colored grid accents. He uses the conventions of painting creation, with its stretcher bars, underlying grid structure and canvas skin, as equal elements in his formal language, mixing and matching underpinnings and surface, image and structural elements to form a new kind of whole that seems to be always in the process of devolving and recreating itself. Images cut out of art history books are inserted into some of the compositions, creating reference to the world outside the abstract system, and setting up viewing lines that behave almost as "a cinematic eye-line match... which mimic, echo and extend the artist’s and viewer’s acts of looking within a spatial field of abstraction." *

However, both artists are involved with our bodily response to their work, using scale and literal dimensionality to approach a sculptural/haptic feeling. Rich built up surfaces in Trincere, textured and cut-open painting skins and wooden grids in Weathersby, tempt us to touch, to experience the painting as object in our own time and space. Weathersby acknowledges and questions the conventions that we use to define painting in its long history. And Trincere's use of shaped canvases also reframes painting's traditional role, from a rectangular window of illusionistic space, into an iconic object of charismatic presence.

As Rudolph Arnheim argues in both "Visual Thinking" and "Art and Visual Perception", the act of perception is in itself a form of thinking, a grasping of basic structural features, which have their parallel in the organization of the outside world. Basing his discussions on gestalt psychology, he states that we perceive wholes, and therefore a needed feeling of balance, through various rules of the connection of parts: through similarity, contiguity, closure, symmetry, and past experience, for example.

Both Trincere and Weathersby operate using these rules to different ends, each forming their own unique species of wholes from parts, but also allowing for their deconstruction again into their constituent elements. By placing their work together in one room, we are made aware, not only of the provocative edginess of each artist's issues, but are newly conscious of our own assumptions and perceptions as viewers looking for solid ground.

Karen Schifano, 2015

*Ken Weathersby Artist Statement