

ARTFORUM

Michael Dopp

KINKEAD CONTEMPORARY

6029 Washington Blvd.

May 8–June 5

The thirteen monochromatic paintings in Michael Dopp's first solo exhibition, "Dilate," form an intelligent and poetic meditation on archetypal dialogues of abstraction, with a self-conscious playfulness that inserts elements of language and corporeality within retinal formalism. The works recall psychologist George Henry Lewes's definition of emergence, wherein "every resultant is either a sum or a difference of the co-operant forces." Here, Dopp frames his "forces" in categories that correspond to four deliberate series—"Kites," "Vanishing Points," "Anemic Paintings," and "Variations on a Room."

Taking cues from Duchamp's 1926 film *Anemic Cinema*, these paintings are visually anagrammatic, engaging a deceptively simple formalism that pushes and pulls between states of generality (the universal, fundamental elements of painting) and intimate specificity (the indexical, the somatic, the imperfect). Elements from each piece are carried into the others, akin to a perpetually looping, psychedelic cross-dissolve. The painted "walls" within the "Variations on a Room" works morph into trapezoidal forms in the "Kite" paintings, and the receding loci of the "Vanishing Point" series move forward in the pictorial plane to become the oculi of the "Anemic" paintings, which in turn mimic the chromatic circles in the "Vanishing Point" pieces, and so on.

In the process of dilation, the eye and mind take in increasing amounts of information until the aperture is too great—overexposure obscures the image and a silhouetted afterimage echoes in the mind's eye. Dopp elicits the same effect with this body of work. Through meticulous arrangement of complementary and antagonistic elements, he activates the pictorial space of the picture plane and cites both body and architecture as core elements of the exploration of abstraction.

— Micol Hebron



Michael Dopp, *Untitled*, 2010, acrylic, oil, and graphite on canvas, 64 x 48". From the series "Variations on a Room."