

# DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

## **Matt Gonzalez**

### *Beauty Will Be Convulsive*

Dolby Chadwick Gallery is thrilled to announce *Beauty Will Be Convulsive*, an exhibition of new work by Matt Gonzalez. Over the past decade, Gonzalez has earned acclaim for his intricately constructed paper collages that harmonize the linear and geometric with color's mesmerizing, deeply visceral impact, transcending the sum of their parts in the process.

Gonzalez created earlier bodies of work using discarded paper products he found while walking the streets of San Francisco. The pandemic, however, slowed this practice, forcing him to rely more heavily on paper he had previously archived as well as on items that had been mailed to him or that he'd purchased for his own use. Included in this collection are beer cartons—specifically, Modelo blue—chocolate wrappers, greeting cards, snack and cake boxes, containers for household items like toothpaste and trash bags, and cigarette “collars,” those small inserts that sit at the front of a pack of cigarettes.

Thus, while these works can still be regarded as a sort of portrait of the city—with many of the found papers signifying urban economic exchange, the flow of goods, and the circulation of ideas—the collages also newly intersect with the domestic and the private spaces of the home. Each triangular cut-out, narrowly trimmed strip, or excised rhomboid, among other fragment shapes, is evidence of something Gonzalez has allowed into his home, symbolizing personal relationships, preferences, and transactions. And yet at the same time, none of these fragments contain hints, either through text or image, of their former lives. Cut up, rearranged, and united with other fragments, they are woven into a new narrative and plunged back into circulation as art, ascribed with new meaning.

Color, too, has shifted with this recent body of work, which is largely monochromatic. “I’ve been paying more attention to values,” Gonzalez explains, “and to the overall intensity of a color and the way saturation can get amplified depending on slight variances within a color spectrum.” The artist has also intermixed gloss and matte paper to alter depth perception, while introducing a degree of restraint to encourage the “monochromatic hues to play off of one another in a refractive way. More space for color fields to be appreciated, even within a relatively small collage, allows the saturation and color variances to dialogue. It also keeps the eye from getting trapped anywhere and the completed collages resonate longer.” The incorporation of these open areas of repose also prevents the sculptural elements from becoming too built up, creating a situation where the interplay is primarily about light and shadow rather than color.

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There are works in vibrant hues of red, purple, and yellow, for example, as well as a number in gold and silver, which are more difficult to source. "I've realized," Gonzalez reflects, "that there's a celebratory nature to these colors. Medals and trophies come to mind; as if something has been won or conferred on the viewer." The title of the show—*Beauty Will Be Convulsive*—can perhaps be located within this revelation. Beauty, as it were, always prevails. With beauty, we can overcome and triumph. And, rather remarkably, beauty is always within our power to uncover, create, and appreciate—a compelling and reassuring message in an unsettling time.

Gonzalez's collages in gold and silver also bring to mind the art of Louise Nevelson, whose wooden reliefs are often painted metallic colors and feature similarly intricate, geometric matrices. Like Nevelson, Gonzalez explores the relational possibilities of form and space, but, conceptually, his practice is more closely aligned with Kurt Schwitters, Dadaism, and the Situationists. A group of social revolutionaries active in the 1950s and '60s, the Situationists emphasized the accidental, relational, and geographical (the latter in terms of both the city and the psyche). These ideas form the heart of Gonzalez's collages, which are created through a process of encountering, culling, and assembling, and which visually evoke an intricate architecture. In them, we see the byzantine design of the city and the systems of movement and exchange it relies on—and also, perhaps, the complex and at times contradictory inner terrain we navigate on a daily basis.

Matt Gonzalez was born in 1965 in McAllen, Texas. He earned a BA from Columbia University and a JD from Stanford Law School. In addition to a practicing artist, Gonzalez is Chief Attorney at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. His art can be found in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; and the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento. This will be his third solo show with the Dolby Chadwick Gallery.