

# DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

**Charley Brown**

*Divergence*

July 11-August 31, 2013

This body of work marks an important turning point for the San Francisco-based artist, who has been a figurative painter his entire life. Desiring the challenges and stimulation of a new aesthetic, Brown recently turned to abstraction as a way of breaking down illusory space into its essential elements. This dismantling and exploration of compound forms has been a slow, cautious project for Brown. *Winterscape #1* and *#2*, for instance, feature imagery reminiscent of bare branches on a raw winter day. The primitive naturalism of these two intermediary paintings, however, ultimately gives way to bold, abstract gestures, while a black and white color palette is expanded to include bright, largely primary colors.

Brown creates a new gestural line in this body of work by applying paint with a brayer rather than a brush. The resulting markings—which are placed sparingly and deliberately—are relatively consistent in width, weight, and value. A type of hand roller, the brayer lends itself well to the creation of perfectly curvilinear forms, which Brown arranges to push energy out, funnel energy in, or pull energy down. This activity is augmented by shadowy echoes produced by a brayer spent of its paint, the canvases' grand scale, and the paintings' smooth, encaustic-like surfaces. The final compositions induce a kind of synesthetic effect, awakening waves of sound that parallel their elegant visual reverberations. It is no wonder Brown identifies Igor Stravinsky, composer of the animalistic and boldly avant-garde *The Rite of Spring*, as one of his artistic inspirations.

While Brown's paintings—especially those in grayscale, such as *June 28<sup>th</sup> #1* and *Composition #1*—are reminiscent of works by Richard Serra, Franz Kline, and Robert Motherwell, Brown cites Marcel Proust's *The Remembrance of Things Past* as the oeuvre's greatest inspiration. At seven volumes long, this groundbreaking literary achievement focuses not on action and plot, but on interiority and the relationship between experience and memory. Brown says, "I discovered what a monumental artistic achievement Proust had accomplished. He changed my world. All these paintings were painted while I listened to those unabridged audiobooks. I'm currently in my fifth reading, and I'm getting to know it well. Proust's work has been a constant reminder to be honest with myself and my work."

In addition to Proust, Brown also identifies Caravaggio (see *Composition #2 After Caravaggio*), Henri Matisse (see *Three Circles*), and Francis Bacon as core influences. While his paintings indisputably build upon and answer to both abstract expressionism and minimalism, their sensuousness challenges the stark masculinity we come to expect for abstract expression while an affinity for experimentation subverts the control and premeditation that underlies minimalism. "It's the accidents," Brown says, "that keep feeding me more ideas."

Charley Brown was born in 1945 in Barstow, California. He studied at California College of the Arts in Oakland, CA, and received both his BA and MA in Art from Humboldt State University. In addition to exhibiting in galleries across the United States and Europe, Brown has shown at the New Museum, New York City and has had murals commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute, the New Main Library of San Francisco, and Stanford University. This will be his first solo exhibition at the Dolby Chadwick Gallery.

# DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

## Charley Brown

b. Barstow, California 1945

### EDUCATION

1971 Humbolt State University, Arcata, California - M.A. in Art  
1970 Humbolt State University, Arcata, California - B.A. in Art  
1966-1967 California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California  
1965 Doxiadis School of Design, Athens, Greece

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
2006 Larry Evans Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
2004 Larry Evans Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
2003 City Picture Frame, San Francisco, CA  
2002 Larry Evans Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
1998 Larry Evans/James Willis Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
1996 Larry Evans/James Willis Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
1994 Larry Evans/James Willis Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
1985 Albrecht Museum, St. Joseph, MO  
1983 F.I.A.C., Jacque Masol Gallery, Paris, France  
1982 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1982 Feingarten Galleries, Los Angeles, CA  
1981 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1981 Dan Turk Gallery, Laguna Beach, CA  
1980 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1979 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1978 Brustlin Workshop, San Francisco, CA  
1978 Gryphon Gallery Ltd., Denver, CO  
1977 Feingarten Galleries, Los Angeles, CA  
1976 William Sparrow Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA  
1975 Gallerie Royale, Vancouver, B.C.  
1975 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1974 Coral Casino Club, Santa Barbara, CA  
1974 Feingarten Galleries, Los Angeles, CA  
1973 Galleries Schreiner, Basel, Switzerland  
1973 Feingarten Galleries, Los Angeles, CA  
1972 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1972 Monterey Peninsula Museum, CA  
1971 Penryn Gallery, Seattle, WA  
1971 Zoomfauk Gallery, San Francisco, WA  
1971 Humbolt State University, Humboldt, CA  
1971 University of Nevada, Reno, NV  
1970 Humbolt State University, Humboldt, CA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1982 Extended Sensibilities, The New Museum, New York, NY

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## **SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA  
Notre Dame University Museum, Southbend, IN  
San Mateo College, San Mateo, CA  
University of New Mexico Museum of Art

## **SELECTED MURAL COMMISSIONS**

New Main Library, San Francisco, CA  
Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.  
Bellagio Hotel, Las Vegas, NV  
Wynn Hotel, Las Vegas, NV  
Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan  
Sony Entertainment World Headquarters, Culver City, CA  
American Embassy, Nicosia, Cyprus  
Grand Casino, Deauville, France  
Pan Pacific Hotel, Yokohama, Japan  
Stanford University, School of Education, Palo Alto, CA