

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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Mark Grotjahn's Momentous "Masks" at Gagosian Gallery London



"Pink Cosco" at Gagosian Gallery London is an exhibition of new, boldly colored, large-scale sculptural bronze "masks" by Los Angeles-based painter and draftsman Mark Grotjahn. The artist is best known for his ongoing exploration of perspective, seriality, and constraint, as exemplified by his experimentation with dual and multiple vanishing points in the "Butterfly" series of paintings.

"Pink Cosco" is the artist's first exhibition of sculpture in which every work takes the same form. Borrowing its title from a Cosco brand stepladder box, the series began with the artist creating "masks" from cardboard boxes that were lying around his studio, which he then painted, adding toilet roll tubes for noses and cutting out holes for eyes.

Although the expressive and gestural nature of the "masks" signifies a purposeful departure from the precision of the "Butterfly" paintings, the uniform yellow and pink palette, same phallic noses, similar motifs, and common size of the long, stretched faces

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present an interesting interpretation of the artist's ongoing engagement with the related concepts of seriality and constraint.

According to Gagosian, the artist's "masks" occupy and continue the "precarious past-future visual position" that is a key characteristic of his practice. The transformation from casual activity to formal practice, and the transition from childhood craft techniques to complex sculpting procedures, together encapsulate the time-straddling nature of his work.

"I called some paintings perspectives, but I'm not interested in perspective; I called some butterflies, but I don't think they are butterflies; I call my sculptures masks, but they are not masks," Grotjahn has said. Continuing this enigmatic and sublime creative path, his "masks" affirm the significance of challenging the conventions and perceptions of painting and sculpture, and time and space.

"Pink Cosco" runs through September 17 at Gagosian Gallery London.

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