

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

Francisco Castro

Duets

16 January to 20 February 2010

Diaz Contemporary is pleased to present a series of new paintings by Mexico City-based artist, Francisco Castro, in his third solo-show at the gallery. In this exhibition, Castro continues his exploration of grids and squares based on the Mexican chessboard game *Juego de Damas*. Working from themes found in *Variations*, his last body of work shown in 2007, Castro continues to explore the dynamic interaction between ground and form in these latest *Duets*.

Here, static forms are an expression of movement, and interchange between fields of vision. Lush, natural and worn colours weave in and out of each other, creating a startling sense of depth on a flat surface. Castro engages with the illusion of the picture plane, creating an experience of lyrical contemplation. Built in layers of colour on a grid, the paintings consist of burnt reds, whites and intense blacks. A delightful sense of movement is elicited from the works due to the shifting of shapes, as squares lightly collide within the gridded space. Castro's practice falls into a "configured" abstraction, dedicated to structures more than geometry, admitting smears, stains, pencil marks and controlled accidents that seen as a whole, give the impression of coherence and rigor. The *Duet* paintings come together as a group in a kind of wordless discussion on the possibilities of abstract form.

In the new *Duets* series, Castro introduces an important variation in his research of the grid and square of the past years. The paintings are thought, painted and exhibited as pairs, and although they maintain the same structure between them, they strive to create differences with the interplay of background and form. For instance, in one *Duet* pair, background becomes form, whereas form becomes background in the other mirror-like painting. Subtle changes in composition are responsible for this formal and perceptual change, which is then enhanced by intense, contrasting colours.

Considered the foremost abstract painter of his generation in Mexico, Francisco Castro continues to exhibit widely in North America. His work is held in numerous public and private collections including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art (New York City), the San Antonio Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art (Mexico City), Museo Rufino Tamayo (Mexico City) and The Jumex Collection (Mexico City). Recent solo exhibitions include *Duet: Recent Paintings* at Gebert Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM in 2007 and *The Red, Black and White* at Howard Scott Gallery in New York in 2009.

Thanks to Jane Egan, Director of Gebert Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM.