

MARTOS GALLERY

Cannon, Seve, "Kathleen White @ Momenta Art," *A Gathering of Tribes*, September 3, 2014

TRIBES

KATHLEEN WHITE @ MOMENTA ART

STEVE CANNON SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

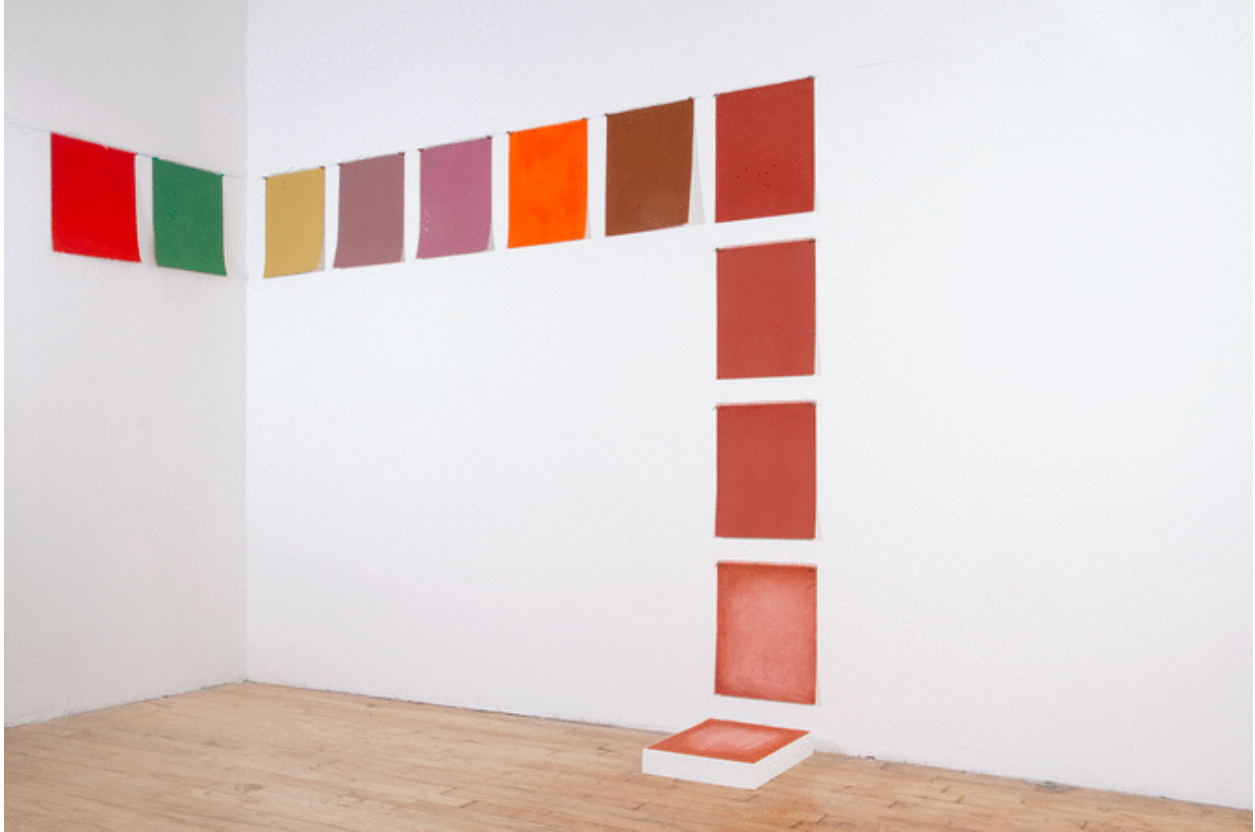


Warm pastel tones unpretentiously pinned to the white walls of Momenta Art inaugurated a mood as precise as the rigorously level blue line which the artist Kathleen White had all but continuously drawn along each. Picture an exploded diagram of a Zen rock garden translated once again into three-dimensional space—that same aura of contemplative stillness pervaded *(A) Rake's Progress*, where the veteran New York-based White found a way to make her highly immersive, yet conceptually-motivated practice mingle with the monochromatic hues of pastel on paper, with the lingering instrumentality of a rake suspended from string, with a pair of worn shoes situated on a pedestal near your feet.



Her pastels were not works of abstraction, but studies in presence, complemented by three installation pieces, a video montage of Ms White's pigments in the snow (made in collaboration with her husband, Rafael Sánchez, in 2009) and a sound piece that served to weave the entire show together. The show's centerpiece, "Rake & Plumb (#1)"—also made in collaboration with Sánchez—was a well-used rake and a steal plumb diaphanously hung by a fiber of string from the ceiling. The frailty of this design demonstrated a decided preference for the aural over the visual—a preference rendered pervasive by the sonic aspect of the show: the staccato clacking of typewriter keys, paced like the traveling of feet across a forested surface.

Delving the conditions of meaning, of expression, the exhibition as a whole was poetry of the highest order; it articulated an actual environment shot through with enough holes or points of ambiguity that visitors could constructively engage their own meaning, discovering their own subjectivity in the process by which they explored the interlocking of the works on exhibit.



(A) *Rake's Progress* created the semblance of narrative, without actually delivering one: a very praiseworthy achievement. Especially when considering the heavy-handedness of other literary artists who showed in NYC lately—Christopher Wool at the Guggenheim comes to mind, along with lesser shows—White's and Sanchez's work spatially presented that which makes suggestiveness possible without depending on the overt use or denial of expressionist techniques. Moments of expressivity were subtle. The blue line drawn around the gallery walls at about eye level was broken in places, like Morse code, perhaps mimetic of the typewriter's broken rhythms; and the pastel works pinned to the line felt gestural. Everything worked to echo the continuousness of time as it closes around the habits of a single life, making the modestly-sized gallery feel mysteriously spacious, an expansive atmosphere bathed in quiet transparency.

Kathleen White: April 26th, 1960 -- September 2, 2014

Jeff Grunthaler