

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

41 East 57th Street • New York 10022, 11th floor • 212.319.1996 • www.jasonmccoyinc.com



ROBERT KELLY: VENUS IMPERIAL

November 15, 2019 – January 10, 2020

Reception for the Artist: Friday, November 15, 5.30 – 7.30 PM

Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present *Venus Imperial*, a solo exhibition of paintings by **Robert Kelly**. Conceived as a cohesive installation, the exhibition brings together a variety of works that date from 2002 to 2019. In this context, single works such as the large-scale *Woodstock Nocturne* or *Mimesis Noir CXXII* aim to provide visual anchors, while smaller groupings including *El Senor*, *Venus Imperial* and *Canary Nocturne* manifest rhythmic investigations of an even more intimate focus.

Though appearing as rather minimal and perhaps even as hard-edge from afar, the work of Robert Kelly is not. Upon close inspection, one instantly discovers delicate surfaces made of layered information, which bestow a unique sense of mystery upon each painting. This quality is rooted in Kelly's material of choice: paper that has been printed in times past and heralds from different parts of the world. In fact, Kelly has spent years gathering and traveling, building a collection that ranges from original film posters from 1950s Russia or 1960s Italy, to German school ledgers from 1879 and a 1969 concert announcement for Woodstock, for example. By mounting these rare historic documents backwards onto the canvas, Kelly transforms them into faint yet atmospheric echoes of the past. Only a few phantom images remain, and Kelly draws inspiration from them as small epiphanies and points of orientation in conjuring up his paintings. Furthermore, he employs a language that honors the aesthetics of his source material and embraces a modernist vocabulary akin to the traditions of the Bauhaus, De Stijl, Russian Constructivism and Neo-Plasticism. His paintings can translate as formal puzzles, dynamic interplays between line, form and color sparked by what lies veiled underneath: a palimpsest of things past and present. Kelly himself has remarked: "*In a way, this marks my search for a continuity of an aesthetic that is coupled with something organic, sensual, and found.*"

Born in 1956 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, **Robert Kelly** received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University in 1978. His work has been exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad, including most recently in Brazil and Italy. His work is represented in the permanent collection of The Rose Art Museum, FL; University of New Mexico Art Museum, NM; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM; Milwaukee Art Museum, WI; Smith College Art Museum, MA; Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, NJ; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, AL; The Fogg Museum, Harvard University, MA; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Margulies Collection, Miami, FL; The McNay Museum of Art, TX, and the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM. Kelly lives and works in New York City.