

# LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

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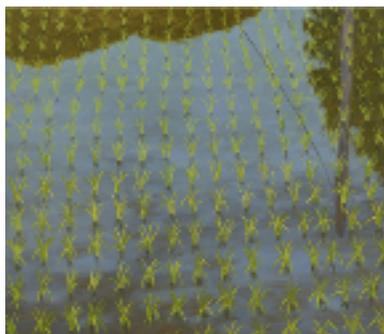
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## Robert Berlind

### Kyoto/Cohecton

January 9 – February 13, 2016

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am – 6pm



*Rice Paddy #5, 2012*



*Ginkaku-ji Coins #3, 2012*



*Nanzen-ji Sanmon, 2014*

We have admired Robert Berlind's work since meeting him twenty years ago and it is our honor to present this exhibition of his recent paintings. Unfortunately, it will be the last of his numerous exhibitions of "new" work during his long career as a painter, as he died at the age of seventy-seven while we were in the final stages of preparing for the show.

He spent five months in Kyoto, Japan in 2011, and his time there gave rise to many of the paintings in this exhibition. As cited in Betsy Baker's text in the publication that accompanies the show, he said, "The unfamiliarity was important. There was so much new stimulus. Especially the architecture – the temple complexes, and rice paddies right in the city, in vacant lots." He made prints, drawings, watercolors and small oils there, which along with occasional photographs became the basis for larger paintings completed in his studio in Cohecton, New York over the course of the next few years.

Several paintings in the exhibition portray those urban rice paddies, early in the season when the young plants have been set in rows in shallow fields of water. Berlind has long explored the spatial complexities of reflections of trees and sky on rippling water in his work. The recent rice paddy paintings took him farther along a path of exploration of the polarities of observation and abstraction in painting.

Two paintings portray these rice paddies viewed through a scrim of chain-link fence that accentuates the divergent planes of subject and the surface of the painting itself. One of them, separated into a triptych of three vertical panels, asserts itself predominately as an abstraction. Coins in a pond in the temple garden at Ginkaku-ji and the Sanmon gate at the ancient complex at Nanzen-ji are explored in other works based on his time in Japan.

Other paintings in the exhibition show Berlind's attention returning to the environment of his studio in the country, bringing nuances from the Japan paintings with it. Betsy Baker recognized that "The Japan paintings deal with subjects that reveal human intervention. Rice paddies are not "nature," nor are coins in a pool of water." *Studio Door* and *Studio Roof* are no exception, paintings in which he framed natural elements in relation to structural aspects of his studio building. *Studio Door* even includes a painting within the painting – a schematic grisaille painting of trees that he had



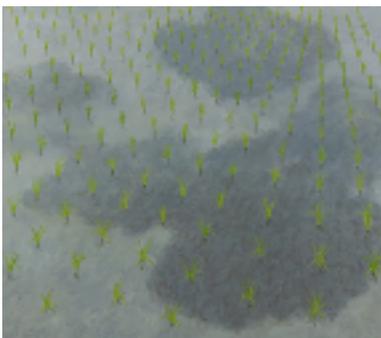
*Pond Grasses #2, 2014*



*Studio Roof #4, 2015*



*Studio Door #3, 2014*



*Rice Paddy, 2013*

painted on the actual studio door that fills the right half of the composition. It is a strikingly complex and masterful painting.

The small painting *Pond Grasses* portrays the only purely natural subject. Curving fronds of grass are silhouetted against sky and the crown of a tree that we understand to be reflected on the water's surface at the edge of a pond. Berlind has said that he sought to "paint the invisible," and in the persuasive union of its not quite cogent parts, this work in particular suggests that he has succeeded.

Robert Berlind was born in Brooklyn in 1938. He received a BA in Art History at Columbia, and an MFA at the Yale University School of Art in 1963, studying with notable faculty such as Alex Katz and Neil Welliver, alongside fellow artists Rackstraw Downes, Brice Marden, Chuck Close and Janet Fish.

Berlind's work began to appear in group and solo exhibitions in New York and elsewhere in the 1970s during a period of renewed appreciation for representational painting. He was included in several projects of The Artists' Choice Museum, a roving artist-run organization formed to support exhibitions of figurative and landscape painters. One such show took place at Tibor de Nagy in 1980. The gallery would later present four solo exhibitions; several were reviewed in the New York Times, as well as in *Art in America*.

A survey exhibition originated at Wright State University in 1997 and travelled to other venues including the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York. The Huntington Museum of Art in West Virginia exhibited his work in 2008. Berlind's most recent solo exhibition in New York took place in 2010 at David Findlay Gallery. This is his first at Lennon, Weinberg.

Berlind has taught at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Yale. He is Professor Emeritus at the School of Art and Design at SUNY Purchase. His critical writing has appeared in *Art in America*, *Border Crossings* and *The Brooklyn Rail*. In 2013, he received the prestigious Art Writers Grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation in association with Creative Capital.

He has twice received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, most recently The Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Award in Painting in this year, as well as grants from the NEA and the Pollock Krasner Foundation. He is a member of the National Academy and received their B. Altman Award for Painting in 2007 and the Award for Excellence in Painting in 2015. His work is included in the collections of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Colby College Museum of Art, Neuberger Museum, Farnsworth Museum, and National Academy Museum. Robert Berlind and video artist Mary Lucier married in 1997. He died on December 17, 2015.