

Carl Palazzolo

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New Paintings

April 27–June 8, 2013

opening reception Thursday, May 2, 6–8 pm

LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

514 West 25 Street

New York, New York 10001

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MEMENTO MORI

Aesop is the earliest of the paintings in this exhibition, and is the most closely related to the prior cycle of work titled *Traces of Absence* that was presented in Carl Palazzolo's solo exhibition at Texas Gallery in Houston several years ago. Each painting in that series featured an object that served to anchor a layered composition of subtly modulated colored fields, freehand brushstrokes and a scatter of rose petals and numbers across the surface. Deftly combining aspects of color-field painting, gestural abstraction, realism and symbolism, he set the stage for the painted objects—a light bulb, a length of rope, a folded striped shirt, a pair of marbles—to play the role of memento mori.

Carl told me that *Aesop*, completed before he conceived the title, made him think of language and storytelling and that the “object”—in this case a yardstick painted to scale—looked like an animate clue to reading the painting's narrative. The petals are paired with numbers that, like the yardstick, advance from one to thirty-six, and are a readily legible metaphor for the passage of our fleeting measure of time. Carl's paintings develop slowly as he builds and refines the layers, and this painting was still on the easel in the spring of 2011 when he learned that his close friend of forty years, painter Stephen Mueller, had been diagnosed with cancer.

Aesop was unfinished when Carl began work on *Daché* and *Opera (for J. S.)*. The three paintings share a vine-like tangle of banded line that had first appeared in watercolors made during

one of the visits that Carl and Stephen made each year to the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. They would stay at the home of their generous friends and collectors, David and Carol Rawle, and make watercolors by a lovely garden. However, that year Carl made the trip alone as Stephen was not well enough to travel. Carl has described the central themes of his work as memory and loss, impermanence and an undercurrent of longing and desire; the progression of Stephen's illness made his sense of these feelings all the more immediate. Stephen died in September 2011, and the rest of the paintings in this exhibition are a particularly specific and personal expression of homage, appreciation and love from one friend, and painter, towards another.

Carl asked if he might have the canvas drop cloths from Stephen's studio that bore the traces of his materials and process. Both painters shared a foundation in theoretical color-field abstraction established during their formal training—at the Museum School in Boston and Bennington College respectively—which served both of them well even as they reacted against its constraints. And so it is appropriate that these stained lengths of canvas, spotted and spattered with the residue of Stephen's acrylic paint, became the actual grounds for the series of five paintings titled *Tears of Things*.

In these paintings, Carl exchanged the metaphoric entities of symbolic objects for elements that quote from Stephen's own paintings. He stretched sections of the drop cloths, added layers of color, tinted rose petals and numbers, and introduced hard-edged shapes in graduated colors that echo Stephen's vocabulary of rounded forms. The act of painting on his friend's drop cloths must have felt both solemn and celebratory, and it is so intimate to have exposed in these

paintings such private feelings of mourning and loss. For a painter who decades earlier created a cycle of works that deconstructed the elegantly dispassionate John Singer Sargent portrait *The Daughters of Edward Boit*, the *Tears of Things* series is as eloquent a statement of the underlying themes in Carl's work as he has ever produced. These are beautiful paintings—formally, technically and emotionally.

Then there are the fragrances. Those of us who knew Stephen have an indelible memory of the mingled aromas of incense, tobacco and scent that perfumed his studio and his person. Carl has made a series of nine paintings in a twelve-by-twelve inch format that both he and Stephen used on and off over the years. Each depicts the bottle of a particular brand of fragrance, each representing a memory of where it was purchased and why it was chosen, when it was worn and with whom it was shared. These paintings are personal in the finest and most meaningful way.

Carl Palazzolo has been an integral part of the Lennon, Weinberg gallery for all of our twenty-five years. Including this one, we have presented six solo exhibitions of his work. All have been rife with references that go beyond the personal and demonstrate his intelligence and wit as well as a stance that values sincerity over irony. The very longevity of our relationship deepens my understanding of the humanity that has shaped this special body of work.

Jill Weinberg Adams

March 2013



Tears of Things #1,
2012, 40 x 36 inches, oil and acrylic on canvas



Tears of Things #2,

2012, 40 x 72 inches, oil and acrylic on canvas



*Fragrances for Stephen #9
(Tabac Blonde),*

2013, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



*Fragrances for Stephen #5
(Shelly Marks Jasmine),*

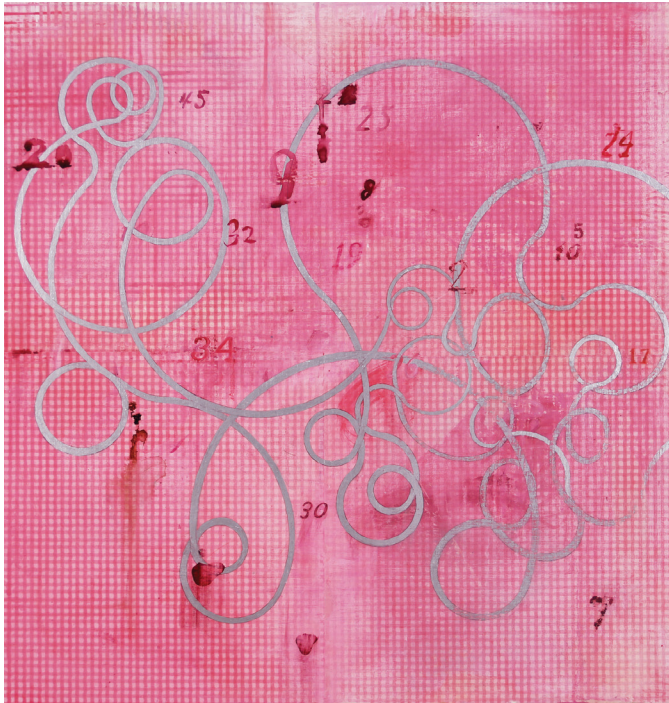
2012–2013, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #3
(Penhaligan's Bluebell),
2012, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #2
(Caron Royal Bain de Champagne),
2012, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



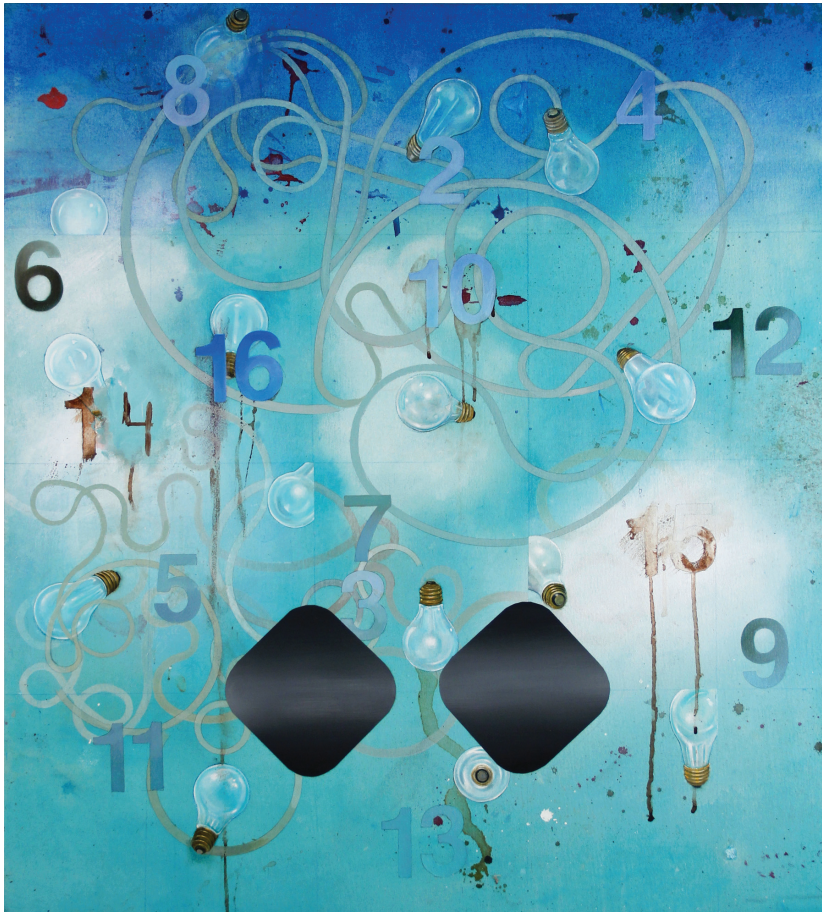


Daché,

2012, 24 x 96 inches, oil, acrylic, ink, pencil, on paper and canvas



Opera (for J.S.),
2012, 40 x 80 inches, oil, acrylic, ink, pencil on canvas



Tears of Things #3,
2012, 40 x 36 inches, oil and acrylic on canvas



Tears of Things #4,

2012, 40 x 72 inches, oil and acrylic on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #7
(Serge Lutens Iris Silver Mist),

2013, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #6
(Knize Sec),

2012, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #1
(Acqua di Parma),
2012, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #4
Guerlain Jicky,
2012, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas



Fragrances for Stephen #8

(Spruce),

2013, 12 x 12 inches, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas

Tears of Things #5,
2013, 40 x 36 inches, oil,
acrylic, ink, pencil on canvas



Born in Torrington, Connecticut, Palazzolo studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in the late 1960s. He exhibited regularly in established Boston galleries during the 1970s and continued to do so long after he moved to New York in 1975. His work was included in the 1975 Whitney Biennial and he had a series of exhibitions at Bette Stoler Gallery in Tribeca. The prevalence of interest in figuration and narrative in relation to abstraction in painting led to his inclusion in numerous group shows during the 1980s.

Lennon, Weinberg represents Carl Palazzolo in New York and has presented six exhibitions of his paintings and watercolors since 1988. He has also had solo shows at Texas Gallery in Houston; Rebecca Ibel Gallery in Columbus, Ohio; Robert Bowman Ltd in London; Stephen Wirtz Gallery in San Francisco; Marguerite Oestreicher Fine Arts in New Orleans and Thomas Babeor in La Jolla, California. In her role as curator, Joan Sonnabend of Obelisk Gallery in Boston, an early and long time supporter of Palazzolo's work, acquired many works for the collections of the international Sonesta Hotels. His work is represented in numerous public and private collections.

Palazzolo has taught at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the University of New Orleans, Massachusetts College of Art, the School of Visual Arts and Syracuse University. He has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Council on the Arts, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Peter Reed Foundation.

In conjunction with the 2013 Spoleto Festival USA, the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, will present *The Spoleto Watercolors of Stephen Mueller and Carl Palazzolo from the collection of David and Carol Rawle*. The exhibition will be on view from May 24 to September 15, 2013.

Palazzolo lives and works in Houston, Texas and Robinhood, Maine.

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