



OLIVIA MUNROE: *ELEMENTS*

March 6- April 3, 2011

Artist's Reception: Sunday, March 6, 2011, 6 - 8PM

ARC Fine Art is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition of new work by Olivia Munroe. The artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery, *Elements* will open with an Artist's Reception on Sunday, March 6th and will be on view until Sunday, April 3rd. The exhibition features three series of abstract works created over the last five years.

"Iconic Geometry" is a series of constructed collages made with beeswax-infused linen, sometimes dyed, which the artist initiated in 2006. A distinguished printmaker, Munroe has developed an original technique for these collages that evolves from her intensely inventive use of material and process. The embossed, burnished surface has the tactile dimensionality of metal plates used in intaglio, but are created by superimposing layers of the heat-fused cloth. The imagery is inspired by the essential, archetypal symbols found in the artistic heritage of world cultures: the circle, representing perfection, eternity, spirit, self, psyche, oneness, and the female, and the square, representing earth-bound matter, body, reality, stability, and the male. Over the last year, Munroe has minimized the palette and composition of some works, such as *Presence in Absence*, lending them an austere formality and gravity, which stand in contrast with the more whimsical arrangements of others like *Chance Encounter* and *Surviving Secrets #1*. Reminiscent of ancient cartography, or partially excavated archaeological floor plans and the subterranean architecture of catacombs, the predominant reliance on fundamental geometric forms has remained constant. The palette is expanded with jewel tones in vibrant turquoises, golden oranges and reds and on occasion deep pinks and purples. Munroe, who lived in Japan for several years, draws inspiration from traditional Japanese aesthetics, particularly ancient sacred textiles, Zen Buddhist garden design and minimalist, modular architecture, and Tantric Buddhist geometric mandala paintings depicting cosmograms.

Also on view are approximately ten graphite drawings from Munroe's "Edge of Infinity" series. This ensemble of exigent drawings was created during a mourning period after the passing of the artist's father. Imbued with a meditative spirituality, they appear as visual renditions of chants, prayers or circumambulations, which is evident in the process and conveyed in the resulting webs of complex and intricate patterning. Each sheet, measuring a sizable 22 x 30 inches, is elaborately filled with expanding or contracting concentric configurations composed exclusively of dots, circles and spirals, suggesting both micro and macro universes simultaneously, as well as the unstoppable nature of time. Cropped on all four sides, Munroe's compositions resist the boundaries of the surface and move towards infinity as the circles push beyond the sheet. Two works, depicting seemingly simple black circles centered on the sheets, stand in contrast to the patterned, more orb-like constellations of circles. These two works, in their quietude and simplicity, are more closely aligned to the strict geometry and Zen nature of her "Iconic Geometry" series.

The final group of works on view is titled "Two of a Kind." Exploring the nature of duality, these mixed-media collages on paper employ the forms of the circle and square, but here the shapes are repeated and arranged in groups of two. Munroe achieves a harmonious balance in her deliberate

compositions. A layering of dyed papers and subtle applications of ink lend the works a textured surface conjuring an enigmatic memory of a time and place once known. The geometric forms serve as symbolic fragments of an ancient place as they stand remaining on their nearly obliterated surfaces, finding a parallel in ancient Roman frescoes or mosaics.

Olivia Munroe has a BFA in printmaking from The Rhode Island School of Design (1976). Her award winning etchings published by John Szoke Graphics are included in numerous public, private and corporate collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Smithsonian. She has been exhibiting her work for the past four decades. In 1995 she founded "The Striped Umbrella", an innovative art and design workshop for children and adults that is conducted in her Black Rock studio

ARC Fine Art is located at 3113 Bronson Road in Fairfield, Connecticut and is open by appointment. Further inquiries, please contact Adrienne Ruger Conzelman at 203 895 9595.