

Ned Vena: Paintings Without Borders 2

Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

January 15–
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Untitled, 2015. Acrylic and Rust-Oleum aluminum enamel on canvas stretched over shaped wooden panel in 16 individual parts. Courtesy the artist.

Paintings without Borders 2 is New York-based artist Ned Vena's first solo museum exhibition, featuring new work made expressly for the artist's presentation at CAM. Vena's austere monochrome paintings and abstract compositions evoke a myriad of 20th-century influences from Kazimir Malevich to Frank Stella. Yet, despite his affinity with historical precedents, Vena is primarily known for his unconventional use of industrial materials and techniques, including Rust-Oleum paint and rotary cut vinyl stenciling.

Similar to his recent work, Vena's new paintings use the letter "G" as the point of departure. Whereas earlier iterations presented the works as pristine, white, recognizable letters in a collegiate-style font, Vena's exhibition at CAM features the letter "G" repeated, painted with an industrial aluminum finish, and fluidly fused into an abstract shape, evocative of a chain link fence. In the artist's words, "This newly reduced legibility functions as a concrete poem. If read, it would go something like this: 'G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G,G, and G,' something like a drawn out choking, gurgling, engine revving sound..."

Vena's act of replication suggests an assembly line, seemingly removing the artist's hand. Upon closer inspection, however, each painting reveals the presence of distinct characteristics such as indentions, accretions and brushstrokes, demonstrating individuality within repetition. This body of work shifts Vena's locus of visual rhetoric from modernism to absurdism and linguistic humor.



Audio Tour

Visit camstludio.org or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the artist and curator on the audio tour.

Ned Vena (b. 1982, Boston) has had solo exhibitions at Project Native Informant, London (2015); Real Fine Arts, New York (2014); Clifton Benevento, New York (2012, 2010); White Flag Projects (2012); Midway Contemporary Art (2009); and Michael Benevento, Los Angeles (2011, 2009). Group exhibitions include Real Fine Arts, New York; Kunst Museum, Bonn (both 2015); and Francesca Minini, Milan; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; and Institute for Contemporary Arts, London (all 2014).

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Ned Vena: Paintings Without Borders 2 is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Chief Curator.



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