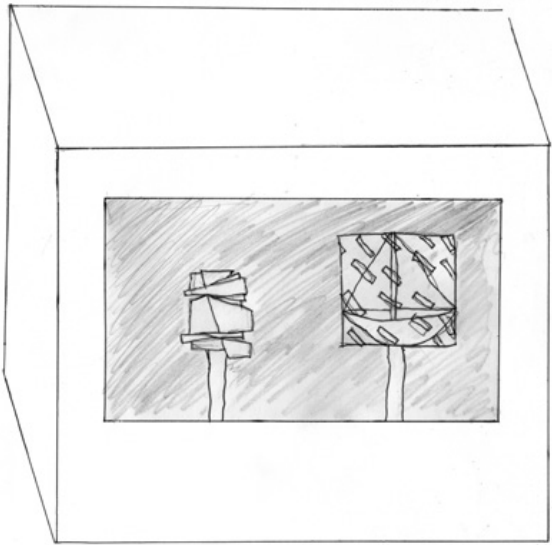


Wyatt Kahn (b. 1983, New York) lives and works in New York. He received his MFA from Hunter College in 2012 and his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. In fall 2015, Kahn will premiere a solo project at Performa, New York (2015). Recent solo exhibitions include Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; Tanya Leighton, Berlin; Adrian Rosenfeld, Los Angeles; LAXART, Los Angeles, and T293, Rome. His work has also been featured in group exhibitions, including *The Space Between*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2015); *A Chromatic Loss*, Bortolami, New York (2014); *The Shaped Canvas, Revisited*, Luxembourg & Dayan, New York (2014); and ReMap 4, Athens (2013). Kahn's work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Hessel Museum at Bard College; and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

This exhibition is generously supported by Sima Familant. Special thanks to Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich.

Wyatt Kahn: Object Paintings is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Usip, Chief Curator.



Wyatt Kahn, *Preparatory Drawing for Performa Commission*, 2015. Pencil and pen on paper. Courtesy the artist.

Related Events

Sunday Studio: Beyond the Brush
Sunday, October 25, 1:00 pm.
\$10; free for members.
Register at camstl.org/studio.

Inspired by Hurvin Anderson and Wyatt Kahn, St. Louis-based artist Amy Reidel leads participants in a workshop on contemporary modes of painting, including masking, spraying, and pouring.

Special Program
Performance: Work
Thursday and Friday,
December 10 and 11, 7:30 pm.
\$25. \$20 members. Purchase tickets
at camstl.org/performance.

Commissioned by Performa, *Work* is the first museum presentation of Wyatt Kahn's theatrical puppet show, which features his paintings as puppets and the artist himself as the puppet master. Staged in CAM's performance space amidst his exhibition, Kahn's cheeky paintings-as-puppets discuss their creator, eventually rising up against him in a humorous, daytime-talk-show-style critique of the artist. This event will have an American Sign Language interpreter.

PERFORMA 15



**Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis**
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Wyatt Kahn:
Object Paintings

Object Paintings is the first solo museum exhibition of work by New York-based artist Wyatt Kahn, on view throughout the museum, including the Lobby, Front Room, Project Wall, and Mezzanine. Containing references ranging from Soviet architecture to Cubism, Kahn's work explores how paintings can be made entirely without paint and hover between two and three dimensions. The exhibition features the artist's signature abstract constructions, which he creates by stretching unprimed canvas over irregular, hand-cut wood panels and then piecing them together, leaving large gaps in the picture plane and disrupting the otherwise dense compositions.

In his recent works, known as object paintings, Kahn's compositions are no longer abstract, but are rather hand-cut shapes combined to form recognizable objects—for example, a clock, a drum, and a guitar. One of these paintings, *Father Time* (2014), is made up of three types of hand-drawn and shaped canvases: one group in which hand-written texts denote the sound the subject makes ("tick tock"), another that serves as pictographic symbols of the overall painting, and a third that reveals an abstraction of the object depicted.

This exhibition premieres a new series large-scale drawings and relief paintings composed of multiple panels of varying depths. Each component comprises a section of the painting's overall architecture. For instance, in *Weight* (2015), a depiction of a foot oscillates between background and foreground, creating a complex spatial relationship. Taken as a whole, the works that comprise *Wyatt Kahn: Object Paintings* investigate how we read signs and symbols, and communicate narrative and content through abstract works of art.

Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

September 11–
December 27, 2015



Him, 2011. Canvas on panel, 43 ½ × 39 inches.
Collection of Adrian Rosenfeld, Los Angeles.

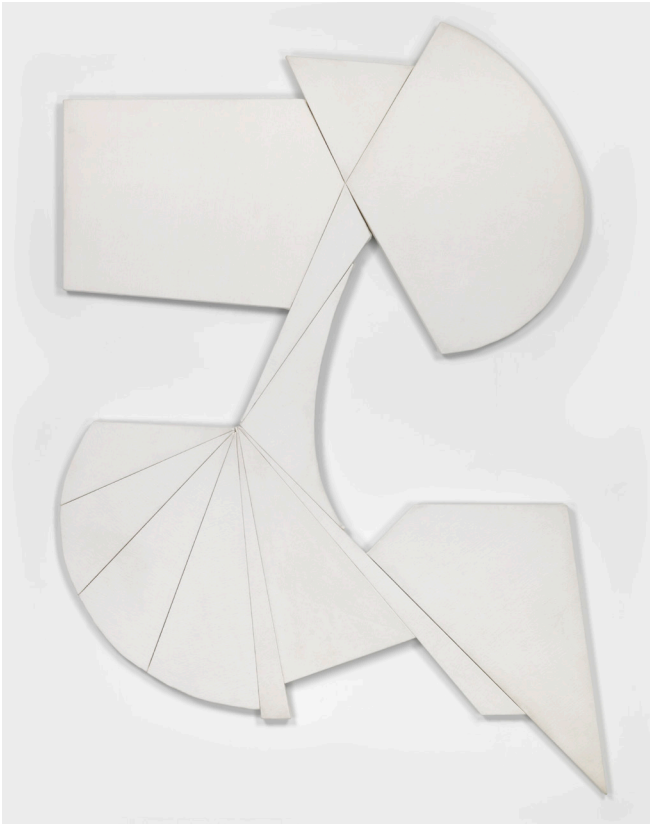


Audio Tour
Download the CAM app at camstl.org/app or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the curator and artist on the audio tour.

White Paintings
Front Room

As seen in *Him* (2011), *Her* (2012), and *Bad Girl* (2015), Kahn questions the distinctions between painting and sculpture by stretching raw canvas over hand-cut wood panels. By consciously leaving the surface of each composition unprimed and vulnerable, the artist records the process of his creation. These characteristics allow the viewer to, in Kahn’s words, “experience the errors in the process that reveal my hand and the very human experience of imperfection.” Similar to geological layers of rock and sediment, the works reveal the buried and forgotten past, indexing the passage of time. This material quality is what separates Kahn from the hard-edge precision of earlier modernist artists.

In his monoprints, located in the Lobby, Kahn arranges oblong wood blocks into compressed compositions that recall his white paintings. Each of the resulting works celebrates the distinctive qualities of the wood substrate by foregrounding a unique visual impression.



Bad Girl, 2015. Canvas on canvas on panel, 96 × 68 ½ inches.
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich.



Untitled, 2013–15. Oil on vellum. Collection of the artist.



Spectacle, 2015. Linen on linen on panel, 96 × 76 × 3 inches.
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich.

Works on Paper
Mezzanine

In this new body of work, Kahn incorporates the techniques of sculpture in his works on paper, creating tactile, three-dimensional surfaces. He begins with preliminary graphite drawings based on sketches, then traces over them with black, wax graphite pencils, producing lines that are raised with substantial weight. Color is incorporated with Lyra Polycolor and Faber Castell Polychromos pencils, producing finely drawn, repeated patterns, both of the object and of words that denote the sound the subject makes. Finally, Kahn overlays the drawings with glue and a layer of archival fiber, which, although traditionally used for repairing paintings or works on paper, is applied here for its unique transparency. This technique expands the limits of two-dimensional drawing through shifts in surface, form, and depth.

Relief Paintings
Project Wall

Continuing Kahn’s signature construction of paintings on canvas stretched over diversely shaped wood, a new series of relief works, composed of multiple panels of varying depths, considers the body in a distinctive manner. These anthropomorphic works abstract the human form into geometric shapes, furthering a Cubist aesthetic. The often intangible qualities of the five senses become manifested in these paintings: *Weight* (2015) investigates the physicality of the body, *Spectacle* (2015) disrupts the capacity of seeing, and *Mono* (2015) visualizes the auditory qualities of sound. The corporeal constructions are represented in absence; viewers are able to experience the weight of a body not in sections that protrude but rather in those that recede into the background. These complex spatial relationships extend the legacy of bas-reliefs, created from the prehistoric and Etruscan periods to the Renaissance, pushing the boundaries of abstraction and representation.



Liquid Smoke, 2014. Paper on paper on colored pencil and graphite on paper, 72 × 44 inches. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich.