

For immediate release

JOHN McCracken

September 11 - October 18, 2008

Opening reception: Thursday, September 11, 6 - 8 PM

Press preview with the artist: September 11, 5:30 - 6:00 PM

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David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by John McCracken. The artist was the subject of a solo exhibition at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium in 2004. His work has been featured prominently in recent major group shows including *documenta 12*, Kassel, Germany (2007); *The Los Angeles Art Scene, 1955-1985*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2006); *A Minimal Future? Art as Object 1958-1968*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California (2004); and *Singular Forms (Sometimes Repeated): Art From 1951 to the Present*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2004). On the occasion of this solo exhibition—the artist's fourth at David Zwirner—Radius Books will publish *John McCracken: Sketchbook*.

Since the mid-1960s, John McCracken has been a key figure in the conceptual expansion of abstract art, in particular, Minimalism. While the artist has explored many geometric formats during his career, he is best known for his “planks”—monochromatic, rectangular sculptures that lean against the wall. The sculptures consist of plywood forms coated with fiberglass and layers of polyester resin. Despite the seemingly industrial finish, each work is meticulously crafted and taken to a high polish by hand. The resulting form is strikingly brilliant, offering the viewer's reflection as a reminder of the heightened physicality of pure abstract form. Illusorily transparent, the works seem to emanate light, recalling McCracken's 1960s association with the Southern California “light and space” movement.

This exhibition consists of multi-part sculptures, comprising nearly 100 components. In a panoply of colors, the singular elements, ranging from 8 to 10 feet in height, suggest the broad chromatic spectrum of the natural world. With deep and vibrant hues, each work is a meditation on absolute color, occupying the space between sculpture and painting by proposing volumetric color as its own conceptual entity. This exhibition marks a departure from the austerity and economy of form that has characterized McCracken's most recent exhibitions, instead celebrating abundance and discovering rhythm through color. To create this new body of work, the artist has altered the proportions of his renowned planks, eschewing frontality in favor of a slender construction and almost equilateral footprint. Engaging both the wall and the floor, like the planks, these new works adhere to the rational laws of gravity, but appear to transcend them, channeling energy in multiple directions.

Deceptively simple, the works simultaneously refer to nothing and possibly everything. The groupings in this exhibition conjure an image of humanity, figuring individuality, heroism, diversity, and interdependence. Exceeding the representation of a singular entity, however, the works concurrently function as a critical investigation of existence and levels of reality. McCracken has said, “All things are essentially mental. Matter, while quite real on the one hand, is on the other hand composed of energy, and in turn, of pure thought.” Amid the boundaries of art and architecture, McCracken creates entirely new connections to Minimalism's central themes by suggesting the integrity of abstraction as a psychological and physiological process.

Please join us and Radius Books Saturday, September 13 at 11AM for a talk and book signing with the artist.

John McCracken: Sketchbook is an exquisitely produced facsimile of the treasured sketchbook used by the artist in the 1960s. A supplemental booklet features an interview with Neville Wakefield and color photographs of the realized sculptures.

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