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# Fleisher Ollman

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## **Mark Mahosky: *Paper View***

September 26, 2014 – November 15, 2014

Historical consciousness permeates the art of Mark Mahosky, from engagement with the history of abstraction to drawings of Civil War battlefields, to an ongoing series of small sculptures based loosely on war memorials and Russian Revolution commemorative parades. His interest in history has taken him to maximum security penitentiaries, where he taught humanities courses to inmates, and to Russia, where he engaged students with presentations of American visual culture, as well as the history of the Russian avant-garde.

Appropriating aspects of Secessionism, Cubism, Constructivism, monumental architecture, and the rough-and-ready sensibility and immediacy of Punk graphic design, in *Paper View* Mahosky distills his scavenging into a uniquely raw aesthetic. His support of choice for his paintings is the detritus of history itself—newspapers, yesterday's news (many were acquired when he visited Russia as a visiting professor in 2007). Wavering stripes and awkward shapes composed of vibrant, delineated colors—linear in some instances and blocky in others—overlay surfaces ripe with imperfection. Mahosky's color blocks also share space with voids of similar shape and scale in which sections of the newspaper support have been cut away creating a lattice effect. Aside from the perforated blocks of his newsprint supports, Mahosky distresses and adds relief to his surfaces in other ways. He collages paper elements, sometimes spelling out barely visible words that have been painted over and obscured. Globby paint application and entombed accretions create topographical effects.

Mahosky's paintings on newsprint propose open-ended interpretative possibilities. On one hand, the gesture occludes politics, strife, and daily crises by literal erasure, and on the other hand, given that the text and images on the pages are never fully obliterated during the painting process, Mahosky seemingly allows the world to creep back into abstract painting, which is something that abstraction has often willfully excluded. Revisiting earlier motifs from his painting practice, Mahosky will also present a new body of work of trees and dead sunflowers, in addition to his more abstract paintings. Here, he meshes abstraction and landscape painting in hybrid compositions that thoughtfully synthesize what might be understood as competing concerns.

A side practice to Mahosky's paintings—and also included in *Paper View*—are small sculptures that resemble tiny monuments. Cenotaphs, battleships, canons, ironic evocations of competition (a monument to the Super Bowl, for example) are crafted from cardboard and painted in Mahosky's familiar stripe and Cubist-inspired paint block style. These monuments in miniature conjure a sensibility similar to his abstractions on newspaper, and the material further underscores their modesty. However, rather than obliterating the pain and suffering associated with the daily news by painting over text, the sculptures suggest a kind of salve from the wreckage of the past through diminutive gestures of scale. They also comment on the fleeting nature of memory and how monuments often become ruins that honor heroes and events that few remember.

Mark Mahosky (b. 1964, Williamsport, PA, lives Mifflinburg, PA) received his MFA from Stanford University (1988) and his BFA from Tyler School of Art (1986). He has had solo exhibitions at Haas Gallery of Art, Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA; Alysia Duckler Gallery, Portland, OR; Fleisher/Ollman, Philadelphia, PA; Joseph Rickards Gallery, New York; and Gimpel Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York. Mahosky has been featured in group exhibitions at Fleisher/Ollman; the Ice Box, Philadelphia; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA; Open Space, Baltimore, MD; and Gettysburg College Art Gallery, Gettysburg, PA, among others. He is Assistant Professor of Painting at Kutztown University, Kutztown, PA.