

SHOW

*Eli Bornowsky
at the Western Front*

words by **jenn jackson** photos by **scott massey**

Upon entering *Walking, Square, Cylinder, Plane* I am filled with an overwhelming anxiety. The exhibition title repeats in my mind cyclically, a rhythmic poem of seven syllables. I circumnavigate the gallery quietly with great concentration. Six paintings, oil on canvas, are hung sequentially down the length of the gallery, three to the left and three to the right. At the end of the space, almost as an afterthought, stands a vitrine, its contents systematically assembled. Fourteen watercolour drawings on paper are placed two by seven. Each column and row is separated by a framework of painted balsa wood, emphasizing an involved yet illusive structure.

While decoding the vitrine I can't help but wonder if it holds the key to understanding the paintings that are now behind me. I turn and begin the cyclical journey again. This continues for an indeterminate amount of time. I do my best to track the repetitious characters of each work. For example, each of the six paintings is composed of two. That is, a larger painting with a smaller hovering above. Assured by the list of works that the mechanics of the installation is dependent upon this dual configuration, I accept

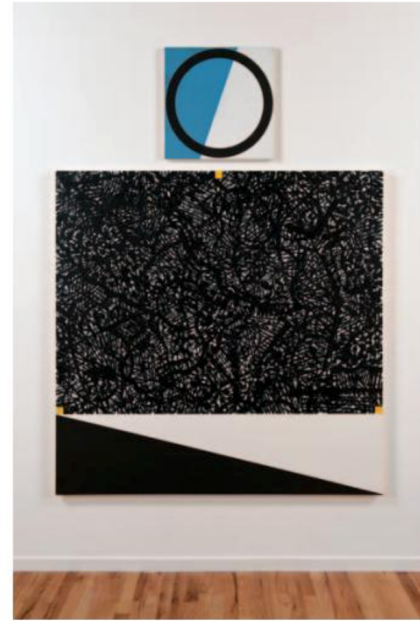
the symbiotic relationship. Gradually I note that the smaller paintings are one of four primary components recited within each work. The other three being a black and white field of illustrative marks, a figure on top of this field, and a strip of colour. The satisfaction gained from this revelation quickly dissolves as the paintings willfully whirl me around for another go.

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Walkings, 2010
oil on canvas, 82" x 60"



Vertical and Horizontal, 2010
oil on canvas, 79" x 60"

Installation view of Walking, Square, Cylinder, Plane.

lation. The hall-like gallery structure, rectangular in form, is bounded by a wall to the east, one to the west, and a door at each end. I mention the configurations of the exhibition room in part due to its recent remodeling, but with particular symbolic referent to the exhibition itself. The space of entrance, an open doorway, is parallel to the formal conditions with which one can approach Bornowsky’s work. The closed door at the opposing end encompasses infinite possibility that is the marking of idiosyncrasy or personal reading. The pull or balance that is reverberated between these two methods is a constant character within Bornowsky’s work.

As mentioned, the east and west wall imply a mirrored effect. Each wall faces its opposition with a field of congruence. From one end to the other there is a continued sense of being in-between. The exhibition requires a voyage from

one place to another and of course demands a subsequent return back again. While occupying one area of vision it is imperative to reflect this experience upon the last, inciting the activation of memory. This effect does not only occur within each work but also between each work.¹ There is a definitive pulling, a movement, and a magnetism that narrates navigation through the space and, as with all planer progressions, the in-between is intuitively skewed into a multitude of perceptual trajectories. □

¹ Note: I refer to Bornowsky’s exhibition components as ‘works’ as a specific denotation. Although the materialized property of the hanging works is well within the parameters of what one would traditionally reference as painting the structure of the works denotes explicit characterization.

