

*The Disappearance of Rituals*

June 24–August 12, 2023

CHARLIE ENGELMAN · CRAIG KAUFFMAN · CHRIS KRAUS  
ALAN LYNCH · HOSAI MATSUBAYASHI XVI · KEN PRICE · PHILIP RICH



ALAN LYNCH, *Untitled (Espiritu Santo)*, 1977. Detail.

Château Shatto is pleased to present Alan Lynch's work for the first time in the ensemble exhibition *The Disappearance of Rituals*. This exhibition follows the gallery's recent announcement of our representation of the Estate of Alan Lynch (1926–94).

*The Disappearance of Rituals* composes a selection of Lynch's watercolors alongside works by the artist's peers and contemporaries, including Ken Price and Craig Kauffman. The exhibition also presents works that extend from corresponding formal or philosophical instincts by artists Chris Kraus, Hosai Matsubayashi XVI, Charlie Engelman, and Philip Rich.

Through precise handling of watercolor, Lynch engages with hard-edge painting and geometric abstraction that became the West Coast's counterpoint to the expressionism that surged in New York in the 1950s. His biomorphic forms in delineated and diaphanous pools of color keyed into the transcendental qualities inherent to Minimalism. These works were typically realized in a consistent scale and produced with ritualistic regularity, connected to his pursuits of Zen and Transcendentalism.

These rhythmic compositions became the main substance of Lynch's practice from 1969 until his death in 1994. He continued developing his watercolors and black ink drawings through a decisive lexicon of forms, pictorial conventions, and methods of application. This sustained focus afforded Lynch increasingly preternatural, formal, and affective clarity.

Drawings in ink by Craig Kauffman and a ceramic sculpture by Ken Price illustrate the formal and philosophical exchanges that the artists sustained with Lynch during both his time in Los Angeles and beyond. In the mid- to late- 1950s, having returned to the West coast after extended periods abroad, Lynch

began pursuing painting in earnest while deepening his appreciation for and collection of Japanese ceramics. His home became a forum for discursive connection, where Lynch would introduce Kauffman, Price, and other Los Angeles-based art to works by *raku* masters.

Hosai Matsubayashi XVI upholds a centuries-long family tradition of crafting Asahi ware. This format of Japanese pottery is realized in Uji, Kyoto and has been in continuous production since the Keichō era (1596–1615), extending to present day through sixteen generations of the Matsubayashi family. The softly dappled, semi-transparent glazing combined with the organic shapes of the stoneware embody the aesthetic lineage from which Lynch so often drew.

Charlie Engelman's work borrows freely from varying object vernaculars—containers, buildings, props, monuments, organs—and unravels how forms become entangled with meaning and association. These modestly scaled sculptures arise from an intuitive process in which tubular and bulbous shapes are carved out of high-density foam and later painted, flocked or left without surface finishing.

Philip Rich's brief and potent output of drawings and paintings was characterized by pictographic distillations of his immediate urban landscape. This work sought to compress and hollow out distinctly West Coast referents through geometrically configured iconography. He would realize one final body of work before recoiling from artistic activities all-together: a sequence of diminutive ink line drawings presented here.

Chris Kraus' 1982 Super 8 film *In Order to Pass* was made in a moment in which the writer and filmmaker was immersed in theories about phenomenology and transcendence. As Lynch had done throughout his life, in this moment Kraus referred to Zen philosophy in order to locate a method for constructing form from ideas:

So I knew then it was going to be a film about memory and nostalgia. What was the difference between remembering something + longing for it? I'd read books by Bachelard + Merleau-Ponty a few years before when I was working in the topless bars + everyone was reading them. But now I went back to them with this urgent and unanswerable question. Reflection, too. Where is the past? The Zen book said. Produce it.

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Alan Lynch was born in San Francisco in 1926 and died in the same city in 1994, having lived at various times in Los Angeles, Paris, Mexico City, North Carolina and various regions of Japan. Before he began exhibiting his work, Lynch received an MFA from Mexico City College and an MA in Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles.

While Lynch's public exhibition history spanned just over a decade, during this time the artist's work was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Pasadena Art Museum; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento; Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles; and Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco.