

a83 EXHIBIT / PRINT / ARCHIVE

MARK WEST: SURVIVING LOGIC

83 Grand Street, New York

03/08/2024 - 04/28/2024



Mark West, *Alive-Alive-O*, 2021. Colored pencil on paper-printed photomontage, 22 x 22 in.

About the Exhibition

Surviving Logic is a selection of works by Mark West. The exhibition is comprised of graphite drawings, hybrid collage-drawings, and paintings.

West, an architect by training, has developed a practice driven by his obsession with technique. Whether working with concrete or color pencils West discovers processes of production that are revealed to him through the material characteristics of each medium. Specifically, in his two-dimensional work the drawing-out of the final composition is a revelatory process in which West collaborates with a carefully constructed ground to facilitate the emergence of a vision of a densely interconnected world.

West's visions are spectacular and quotidian, their exceptional nature largely the result of his commitment to follow a simple and relentless process dictated by the physical constraints of his materials—graphite, color pencil, concrete, fabric—to its logical extreme.

The “*blackout*” drawings (monochrome hybrid collage-drawings) are the earliest of the works on exhibit and represent a pivotal moment in West's practice happening shortly after his graduation from The Cooper Union. Inspired by Max Ernst, the blackout drawings are the seed of his experimentation with technique or technical considerations as a determining force without reducing the work to rationalism or empiricism. Surrealist influences are ever-present in West's practice as he decisively circumvents willfulness instead choosing to employ happenstances, physics, or the subconscious. For West the physically repetitive process of drawing facilitates a meditative state in which the drawing reveals itself through its making

As previously mentioned, West's drawings always begin with a ground from which they emerge. The ground or the decisions that are made to establish a departure point from which the images are developed is different for each medium on display. However, departure point is a deceptive term as it suggests that the real work begins after this moment when in fact a large part of West's mastery is in precisely establishing the parameters from which to work. As in the case of his fabric-form concrete casting, it is his control over the two-dimensional patterns in coordination with his understanding of the dynamics of fluid concrete acted on by gravity that generates the final pieces. In his painting and drawing practice West often begins with a photo collage or a graphite field of a mid-grey and similarly carefully calibrates how and when to let the process take over.

Beginning with “*The Garden*” and extending into West's most recent works (the polychrome hybrid collage-drawings and paintings) the smooth intermingling of photography and photorealistic representations of semi-pictorial realities makes the distinction between what is real and what is image an entertaining and hallucinatory game. Looking closely at this work the photograph reveals to the viewer its true nature as an artificial image masquerading as a depiction of reality while the visions composed of West's markings in color pencil and paint begin to impose their material certainty that they are in fact what is real in the composition. West's work, both in the fields of art and architecture, visually flickers between precise legibility and an indefinite or emergent state. Scale is equally undermined, as the viewer calibrates the scene. At first observing the composition as a whole one's eye is drawn ever further into details within details, a frenzied diminution which only breaks down at the perceptual limits of vision, there is a strong sense that these scenes continue beyond our observation.

Mark West: Surviving Logic is open March 8 through April 28, 2024 at 83 Grand Street, New York. An opening reception will be held on March 8 from 6–8PM.

Artist Bio

Since 1981, Mark West's practice in drawing and painting has preceded and accompanied his technical inventions in fabric-formed concrete architecture. A former professor of architecture and native New Yorker, he now lives and works in Montreal, Canada at his Atelier Surviving Logic, and since 2023 as co-founder of *Ceci n'est pas un musée*, a miniature cultural institution also located in Montreal.

About a83

a83 is a nonprofit organization with a three-part mission to exhibit, publish, and promote experimental projects in architecture, art, and design. Building from the previous operation, John Nichols Printmakers & Publishers (1978–1994), the organization continues to operate at the original location in SoHo as a printmaking studio, project-space, and growing archive. The 83 Grand Street location is used to produce exhibitions and installations, host workshops, and broadcast work to new audiences.

Press Contact

Please direct all inquiries including requests for high-resolution images and a complete list of works to Clara Syme clara@a83.site or Owen Nichols owen@a83.site

For exhibition updates, visit www.a83.site/mark-west-surviving-logic