

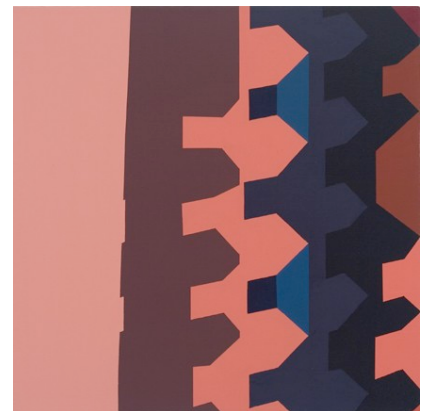
**Mike Childs**  
**Curated by Cameron Martin**

December 8, 2005 – January 28, 2006  
(Opening Reception: Thursday, December 8, 6-8pm)

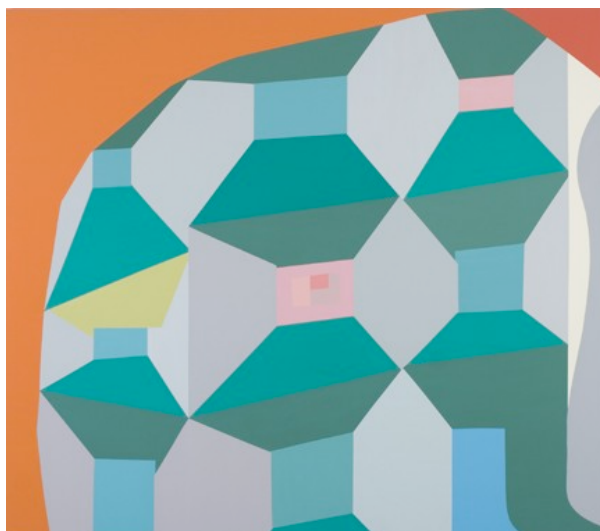
“... this exhibition contains the most sophisticated articulation to date of Mike’s personal sensibility and particular view of the complex space of the urban world.”

—Cameron Martin

Growing up in Toronto during the 1970’s, artist Mike Childs experienced a city in the perpetual motion of demolition and rebuilding. Now, living and working within the heady atmosphere of New York’s present building boom, the constant reworking of a city’s skyline continues to hold a certain fascination for the artist. Constantly absorbing and incorporating new influences, Childs’ architectonic investigations of pattern and color constitute his most recent series of acrylic paintings. Grid-like patterns formed by the clusters of Midtown Manhattan buildings, their individual exteriors, combined with the arbitrary patterns and color formations found within Pennsylvania Amish and Gee’s Bend quilts, are among the rich mosaic of visual references which have informed the seven paintings and two drawings selected for his first solo exhibition. Quilt making represents a homespun, feminine vernacular, whose idiosyncratic compositions of form and color, along with shifts of scale, provides Childs with the ideal counterbalance to the disciplined formalism and elitist underpinnings of his academic training, and the totemic masculinity of architecture. An inveterate collector of sensations and information, and a self described “junk collector” of simulations, Childs is able to explore the innate contradictions in how patterns are formed by often looking up at Midtown office buildings at night, and tracing the random grids of light produced by the assortment of lit offices.



removed, 2005  
Acrylic on canvas, 25" x 25"



lanethrone, 2005  
Acrylic on canvas, 58" x 66"

Childs’ approach to painting though is more rigorous than spontaneous, requiring him to work from sketches, re-visit, and re-work a painting over time until he achieves the necessary results for completion. In many ways, this ability to review and edit over long periods of time relates to his love for discovering the strange hodge-podge progression of buildings which chronicle periods of downturn and renewal along the main streets of once-celebrated Northeastern cities and towns. Though lacking the hubris and brio of New York’s and Toronto’s corporate structures, Childs views these hidden architectural gems, located in places like Atlantic City, NJ; Buffalo, NY; and Worcester, MA, as mausoleums with a hidden language buried within them, to be resurrected and reinterpreted in the artist’s mind into fragments of beauty.

(Cont.)

Rendering unusual pattern discoveries into pen and ink drawings on post-card size paper, he later sifts through these drawings and uses them as building blocks for his larger scale work. During his wanderings, Childs also looks for color relationships. Wonderful color passages catch his eye in some very unusual places, such as piles of building materials stocked next to or on top of each other found at construction sites.

Color is the most delicate aspect of creating imagery, and is the most instinctive part of what he does. The title for *flaventhron*, 2005, a particular color designation for the sky, came from a vast color chart located inside an unusual pigment store he frequents, whose color offerings are vast enough to help him match the colors in his head. Color functions in Childs' paintings like the sounds produced by musical harmonies. Having long been interested in minimalist composers like Steve Reich or Philip Glass, he finds that certain parallels exist between their use of repetition in the patterns of their musical forms and his own relationship with patterns.

Though his architecturally-influenced abstraction has passed through many phases, the spirit of renewal remains a constant underlying force in his work. "The act of making an image," according to Childs, "really defines, as do our contemporary cities, the notion of undetermined boundaries being drawn. Each limitation of scale seems immediately surpassed by some new innovation and each new idea requires the cleared space in which to work."

*Opening reception supported by the Canadian Consulate in New York City.*

For additional exhibition information, please contact Beatrice Wolert-Weese, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212 206-3583, or email [beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org).

#### **ARTIST'S BIO:**

Mike Childs was born and grew-up in Toronto, Ontario. He received his undergraduate degree in studio art from the University of Guelph, Ontario in 1990. In 1992, he was accepted to the MFA program at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Following graduation, he received the Florence Study Award from FSU and spent five months painting and studying in Italy.

After returning from Italy, Mike moved to New York, where he has been living and working since. He has participated in several group shows both in New York and in Seattle, and most recently at the ALJIRA Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, NJ as well as Artek Contemporaries in New York City. In addition to showing, he has co-curated (with other artists) three shows, one of which was a site-specific installation in a Queens skyscraper entitled "Six Windows." Awards include a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and the Lower Manhattan Arts Council Award. His current studio is in Long Island City.

#### **ABOUT CUE:**

*CUE Art Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization that is dedicated to supporting under-recognized artists via a multi-faceted mission spanning the realms of gallery exhibitions, professional development programs and arts-in-education.*

*CUE Art Foundation's operations and programs are made possible with the generous support of foundations, corporations, individuals, and its membership. Additional programming assistance is provided in part with public funds from The Experimental Television Center's Presentation Funds Program, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts.*