

DAN WALSH

THE PROCESS OF PAINTING



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PAINTING IN EVOLUTION

With this publication, American artist Dan Walsh allows the reader to enter his studio and follow his idiosyncratic artistic process. By showing the different stages that a group of 12 recent works (2019–2022) navigated, he generously offers an insight into how a painting is built, how colors and forms merge together, how photography is a precious tool for painterly thinking, and how composition and structure are organic processes even if the result in his case is fundamentally geometrical and grid-based.

In his essay entitled “Ways of Seeing/Ways of Seeking,” New York-based art critic and curator Bob Nickas, a long-time connoisseur of Walsh’s practice, traces the genealogy of such an unveiling of the painting process, from legendary examples like Willem de Kooning’s *Woman 1* (1950–1952) to Walsh’s contemporaries. Addressing the paintings reproduced in this volume, Nickas writes: “There are, on average, seven photographs that tell the story of how a painting emerged. The editing of them for publication, a necessary matter of concision in relating the image as it unfolded, may be related to the creation of the paintings themselves, the fine-tuning each requires. As Walsh pursues images, teasing them out, they begin to appear to him, a holistic coming together of elements, at times as alternating currents, compositionally, chromatically. Of this he has said, ‘The logic of the painting reveals itself to me.’ The artist’s way of seeing is also a way of seeking. He might not have made any of these paintings if the process was predictable.

In each instance, comparing the first photograph taken with the last, even with all those in-between, we are still left to wonder, 'How did he get from there to there?' Walsh very likely surprised himself as well."

Dan Walsh (b. 1960, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) is a painter, printmaker, bookmaker, and sculptor. Rooted in a meditative geometry, his work explores the boundaries of abstraction through subtly irregular shapes, inconstant lines, and a pervasive wit. Walsh's work has been exhibited in venues throughout the US and Europe, including The Museum of Modern Art and the New Museum, New York; the Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Nice; the Rhode Island School of Design Art Museum, Providence; and the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva. He has also been included in the Ljubljana Biennial, Slovenia; the Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art, France; and the Whitney Biennial, New York (2014). In 2019, his work was the subject of a 10-year retrospective at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht.