

LOS ANGELES

**Channing Hansen
at Marc Selwyn Fine Art**

Channing Hansen's work is a perfect blend of high and low technologies. His knitted paintings are created via an algorithm that determines what kind of stitch, what color and texture of yarn, and the duration for each. The result is a seemingly arbitrary but intricately programmed composition devoid of subjectivity. Hansen, who began knitting more than a decade ago, was able to parlay this craft into fine art. He is intimately involved with the process from beginning to end; he acquires raw fleece, dyes fibers, spins yarn, and hand-stretches the pieces over wooden frames. His methodology is akin to that of a painter who carefully mixes and prepares a palette of colors, yet rather than paint and brushes, Hansen's tools are the computer, yarn and knitting needles.

His current body of work entitled *K²* is both a reference to Malevich's *Black Square* (1915) and the color black (K) in the CMYK printing process. In this series of darkly toned works, Hansen sampled different CMYK values in printed reproductions of black paintings throughout art history and used those values as the basis of the algorithm by which he composed these works. While Malevich's *Black Square* is the quintessential non-objective painting, Hansen's desire is to remove subjectivity but not the hand. Each of his large-scale loosely draped compositions, a montage of knitting styles in tones of black and gray, is a complex work that engages with the formal properties of abstraction. The paintings are purposely translucent; Hansen allows the wooden structure on which they hang and the wall behind them to assert a presence, confusing positive and negative space. Though amorphous, these forms have a commanding physical presence. Darker shapes push against light in *K²:KW:09* (2015), reminiscent of the undulating gestures in Sol LeWitt's later gouaches. *K²:FS:08* (2015) both references Frank Stella and recalls a pattern found on a Himalayan winter hat, whereas *K²:KM:02* (2015) is a loosely knitted replica of Malevich's *Black Square*. A key work in the exhibition is *K²:index* (2016) a grid of 25 squares, each 12-by-12 inches, in which Hansen's knitted gestures are isolated on individual frames. Hansen indulges in the use of the term index and its multiple referents, from the sequential arrangement of materials, to a table that contains the key to understanding, to a guiding principle.

With roots in performance, computer programming and craft, Hansen has created an idiosyncratic approach to painting, one that involves the implementation of machine-generated random instructions—how and what to knit—carried out by the human hand.

—JODY ZELLEN



"K2:FS:08," 2015, Channing Hansen
VARIOUS NATURAL FIBERS, BAMBOO, BAMBOO
CARBON FIBER, HOLOGRAPHIC POLYMERS,
WILD SILK, REDWOOD, 61" x 51"
PHOTO: COURTESY MARC SELWYN FINE ART