

ART ENTHUSIAST



CHRISTOPHER BADGER: "Lunar Mirror" at Jessica Silverman Gallery

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Christopher Badger, Installation view, Jessica Silverman Gallery

In a unique blend of artistic practice and scientific inquiry, Christopher Badger's "Lunar Mirror," at Jessica Silverman Gallery debuts the artist's new series of polished cast aluminum sculptures, "Lunar Mirrors," and a 7x7 foot chalk-and-oil masterwork, "Shadow Phase." Inspired by such artists like Robert Smithson, Sol LeWitt and Heinz Mack, as well as his interests in ancient Greek geometry and astrophotography, Christopher Badger continues his exploration into the relationship between abstraction and earthworks.

Badger's previous solo exhibition at Jessica Silverman Gallery in 2010 explored a similar fascination of the natural landscape's dramatic modulations. Works on view resulted from a trip to the peak of mount Whitney, the highest point in the continental U.S., and the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere, the Badwater Basin. Badger's touchstone for this exhibition is the moon, where the artist advances his interest in the process of map-making, investigating subjective associations within this supposed objective process. Badger traces topographical lines of aerial photographs of the moon produced by the Apollo 15 crew in 1974, makes a vector map and uses a 3-D modeling program to create digital files, from which the works are cast. The resulting aluminum sculptures, polished to a mirror finish, reflect the viewer's rippled and scrambled visage on its surface. Audiences are incapable of examining the surface without likewise examining themselves. The breakdown and distortment of one's reflection is an eloquent metaphor and opens

a provoking dialogue to the perhaps at times tenuous relationship in aerial cartography and photography between the categorization of the surfaces of objects and its true properties.

Also on view, Badger's precise chalk drawings explore different permutations of basic geometric shapes, replacing systematic composition with perhaps more of an artistic, intuitive process. The *Construction* series' elegant chalk abstracts on black gesso ground recall classical Greek mathematical equations while concurrently reveal the artist's interest in the aesthetic ideals of 1960s and 70s Minimalism. The creation of geometric objects is by vicarious, not primary markings: the circles' overlapping areas are what actually create the intended shape. In this way, Badger insightfully layers upon LeWitt's formatting of space with cuboid frames that developed the void into an essential building block of structure, defining what its audiences see as shapes, the perimeters of space.