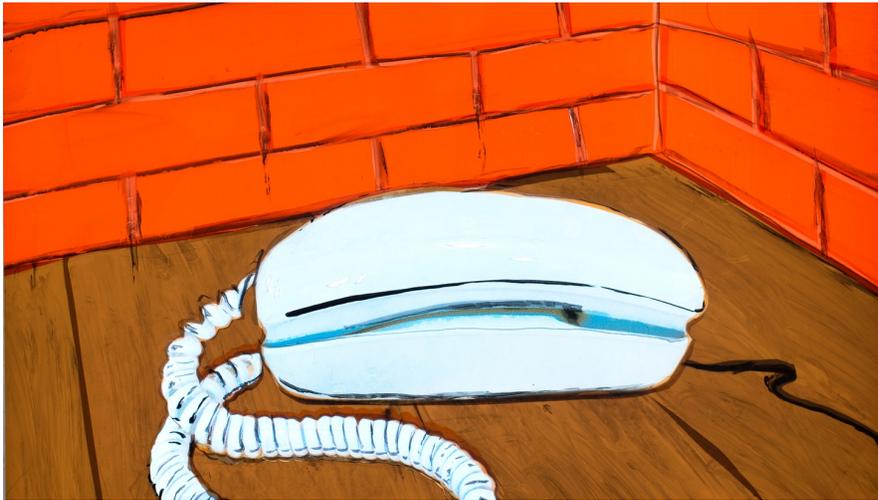




ART TALK

# T. Kelly Mason at Cherry and Martin Gallery

Hosted by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp Jul. 02, 2015



Post-conceptual art is quite often concerned with systems of signs and T. Kelly Mason has taken that quite literally in an exhibition at Cherry and Martin Gallery on view through August 1. The artist, with a masters' degree from Art Center, was encouraged early on by artists Mike Kelley and Christopher Williams. Over the years, he has made works using photography, text and/or displaced objects as well as performing as a musician.

To support himself, he trained as an electrician, employment that came to the fore a few years ago when he began making paintings within lightboxes, the sort used for commercial advertising. Part of their appeal is the disjunction between the usually slick appearance of lightboxes in both commercial signage and contemporary art and the painterly effects achieved by Mason by cutting shapes from acrylic gels to compose images within loosely painted black outlines. The signified meaning of each picture is quite literally a sign.



T. Kelly Mason, "The Moment 1966" (Blue Stripe), 2015  
Mylar and vinyl on LED fixture, aluminum, Plexiglas, Celtec, Dibond, LEDs and wiring  
96 x 21.25 x 5 inches (243.84 x 53.98 x 12.7 cm)  
Courtesy of Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles  
Photo: T. Kelly Mason Studio and Brian Forrest

For Mason, these began as a way of representing the studios of various artists, an idea that he continues in this exhibition with tall, thin lightbox renderings of Barnett Newman's vertical stripe paintings in a studio or gallery. The locations, based on archival photographs, is important to Mason. His actual search for the visual history is part of his process.

Mason's new series includes four tondos with "conceptual renderings" from different angles from the International Space Station, views that are classified according to NASA, of the Nile River or the Mediterranean. A whirling spiral of a typhoon over China includes a tiny collaged picture of a keyhole satellite,

## CRISTIN TIERNEY

thought by conspiracy enthusiasts to be used for surveillance. The spying notion is further explored in Mason's painting of a surveillance detector kit encased in a valise.

In short, the showing is fundamentally about seeing, about how artists are seeing and being seen, about who is watching us and how we are watching. And who is listening? The first picture in the show is a Princess phone, a dip into nostalgic memories of an innocent pre-mobile era, while the last piece in the show is of a Stingray device used to surreptitiously record phone calls. Mason lays out work of winning appearance fraught with complicated implications. A sign of the times, and just in time for the Fourth of July.