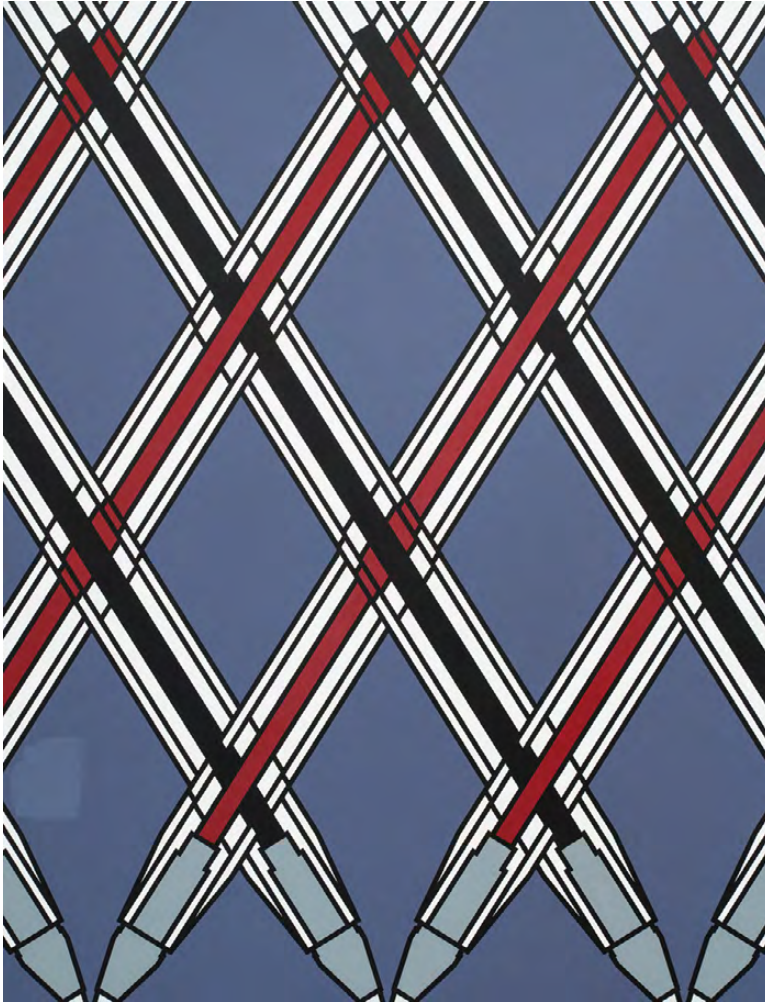


GAGOSIAN

Gagosian Announces *XXIII*, an Exhibition of New Paintings by Adam McEwen in Rome



Adam McEwen, *Kling Klang*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 84 × 65 inches (213.4 × 165.1 cm) © Adam McEwen.
Photo: Rob McKeever

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ROME, January 30, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce *XXIII*, an exhibition of new paintings by Adam McEwen. Opening on February 10, 2023, this is McEwen’s debut solo exhibition with the gallery in Italy.

The protagonist of the works in *XXIII* is the ballpoint pen, an ubiquitous and instantly recognizable icon of modern design. McEwen transforms the transparent, hexagonal shapes of the pen into flat, schematic renderings in acrylic paint that accentuate both their linear forms and their creative potential. The works’ dimensions are slightly larger than those of a tall person, while their compositions suggest relationships that are both mechanical and figurative in their implications.

In their defamiliarization of the everyday, these paintings relate to the artist’s past works, from life-size sculptures of functional objects milled to scale in graphite to the obituaries of living people that are the focus of his concurrent solo exhibition at Gagosian London (on view from January 26 through March 11, 2023). They also resonate with the appropriation of mechanical drawings into the realm of painting by figures such as Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, and Roy Lichtenstein.

In the main gallery, seven identically sized rectangular canvases are grouped to emphasize compositional and symbolic interrelationships. Simultaneously aggressive and whimsical, they suggest emblems of competing ideas and social structures. These works are unified by their purple grounds, with hues from lavenders to violets applied alternately as monochromatic washes and painterly passages that contrast with the bold lines of the pens. Purple is a color long associated with the history of Rome, from the senators and emperors of the ancient empire to liturgical vestments, while the crossed lines made by the pens in many of the works resemble the Roman numerals of the exhibition's title.

Arrayed in precise parallel lines, pens with red ink in *Materiel* (2023) point down in a diagonal configuration that conveys a sense of militaristic conformity. *Kling Klang* (2023) crosses black-ink and red-ink pens, their layers of interwoven lines implying a kind of dance or physical engagement. In *Procession* (2023), the sense of regularity and order is challenged by one pen that breaks ranks, while *Good Night* (2023) replaces the straight lines of the pens with fantastically wavering forms.

The largest painting in *XXIII, Big Spear* (2023) recollects the jumble of lances in Paolo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (c. 1435–40, Uffizi, Florence), a key work in defining the potential of linear perspective by the Renaissance master. Upstairs are works on oval supports that play off the rounded shape of the main gallery space. The arrangements of pens in these paintings take the form of the cross in *Colosseo No.1*, the self-devouring Ouroboros in *Colosseo No.3*, and the figure 8 or infinity sign in *Colosseo No.5* (all 2023)—symbols that resonate with the history of Rome and beyond.

Adam McEwen was born in 1965 in London and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Arts Council Collection, London; Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Scotland; Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf, Germany; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, Connecticut; Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, Florida; de la Cruz Collection, Miami; Rubell Museum, Miami; and Museo Jumex, Mexico City. Exhibitions include the Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, Texas (2012); Museo Civico-Diocesano di Santa Maria dei Servi, Città della Pieve, Italy (2015); *I Think I'm in Love*, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2017); and *10, Feels Like 2*, Lever House, New York (2019).

#AdamMcEwen

ADAM MCEWEN

XXIII

Opening reception: Friday, February 10, 6–8pm

February 10–April 1, 2023

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