

Eric Dever Biography

Born 1962 in Los Angeles, California, Eric Dever graduated from Westchester High School in 1980 with a precollege full scholarship to Otis College of Art and Design, which he completed, later graduating from California Lutheran University (BA'84).

In September 1986, Dever boarded a plane at LAX bound for JFK with \$2000 and a suitcase to begin graduate studies at New York University (MA, Steinhardt'88). Artist Marcia Hafif, his advisor and mentor recalls, "...even in our first interview getting him into NYU art studies, I found him to be an unusual young man, and we did have a good rapport. Interesting to hear about his memories of a meeting at my loft with the class—and potato chips. I thought they needed to know more about an art life so took them to see about grinding pigments as well as what a studio looks like." (S. Ravitz, personal communication, March 10, 2017)

In the early 1990's, Dever established studios in Williamsburg, Brooklyn followed by the East Village, working part time in the architecture firm of I.M. Pei and Partners for over a decade, while painting and advancing his own work in museum, academic and gallery venues nationwide and overseas. Highlights include one person exhibitions at the Hudson River Museum, Hastings on the Hudson, New York; Nicholas Davies Gallery, New York; and Le Cloître des Billets, Paris, France. A portion of his painting portfolio was published as editorial illustration in *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *St. Martin's Press*.

Dever moved to Eastern Long Island in 2002, limiting his palette for 4 years to Zinc and Titanium White, which enabled him to uncover a white spectrum ranging from opacity to translucency, while developing a heightened sensitivity to the properties of the linen, canvas and burlap, providing both surface and support in the work. In 2007, Dever was commissioned to paint a suite of 8 white paintings for The Francis J. Greenburger Collection by curator Elisabeth Akkerman.

In 2010 Dever added black, widening the range and force of the work. The new compositions were largely geometric and included grayscales, circles graded from dark to light. Exhibitions of the resulting paintings include, *Grey Matter* at the Painting Center in New York, *Doucement* at ParisCONCRET, followed by an illustrated essay, Rrose, "Dever," *Maquinariadelanube*, Barcelona, 2011.

On August 30, 2012, *The Painting Plays* opened at Guild Hall in East Hampton, New York, featuring Joe Pintauro playwright *Cloud Life*, and a large oil on burlap painting on stage with the same title by Eric Dever. A painting "... which Joe Pintauro admires for what he sees as its struggle between Dever's signature reductive color minimalism and the artist's morphing into representation..."¹

Dever began testing prepared red hues and by 2012 had arrived at Naphthol Scarlet, a modern replacement for Vermillion. Working through some of the earlier compositions, relative color, so eloquently presented and discussed by Josef Albers, emerged in this work. Background painting incrementally became foreground displaying a pulsing metallic quality made visible as similar values of opposite tones were placed alongside. In an exciting sense, color itself had become material for Dever.

"...A series of eight paintings whose color he [Dever] has limited to variations on red, white and black—in effect, editing out all other colors in his exercise in artistic redaction,"² followed in an exhibition at the Islip Art Museum, *Redacted*, curated by Janet Goleas in 2014.

Recent one artist exhibitions include Berry Campbell Gallery, New York (2014); Molly College, Rockville Centre (2014); New York University, Kimmel Galleries, New York (2015-16); Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California (2017). Dever's work was included in the permanent collection exhibition, *Parrish Perspectives: Art in Context*, curated by Alicia G. Longwell at the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York (2017). His paintings are currently on view in the U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong and Macau, Art in Embassies, Department of State exhibition (2016-19), and were featured in a lecture by Gail Levin, Distinguished Professor of Art History, Baruch College and the CUNY Graduate Center, *American Art and India: Cultural Exchange Among Artists of India and the United States*, at the Pollock Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York (2016).

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In January 2019, Berry Campbell Gallery will present *Eric Dever: Painting in a House Made of Air*. For more than a decade, Dever worked with a square canvas and limited palette, white for four years, then white and black for two years, followed by white, black, and red. Uncovering a remarkable variety, both in hue and composition, most notable when the works were placed together, each painting held its own. “The shift began when I let go of the square, moving to a rectangular format loosened up my compositions, there was no longer a central area of interest, but multiple areas of concentration.” More strikingly, Dever rediscovered color—not just one at a time, but the entire spectrum.

“This new palette emerged 2 years ago while I was planting a garden, coupled with an awareness of the Indian and yogic notion of the *chakras*, 7 energetic centers in the human body where matter and consciousness meet, which also parallel the visible spectrum. I found myself taking cues from flowers as they blossomed, their color entered my paintings. At the height of the summer I had used all of it, mostly mixing tints. The apprehension of color stuck with me, and by the following summer I began new mixing hues.”

Dever’s painting approach also involves exchanging shapes between canvases, often through a monoprint process of painting onto a surface and transferring that to a canvas. “These repetitions of forms and other planned elements, together with his more gestural painting of the rest of the canvas, creates a charged tension between spontaneity and organization...one of the ways de Kooning worked.”³

In 2012 at the invitation of artist Robert Dash, Dever inaugurated the first painting classes, which were critiqued by Dash, at the Madoo Conservancy, Sagaponack, New York. Dever continues to actively present innovative classes and workshops at the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York, where he has also spoken on the Parrish permanent collection, recent exhibitions including *Parrish Perspectives: Art in Context*, James Brooks, and Dever’s own oeuvre in *PechaKucha*-Volume 19.

Dever’s paintings have been shown in solo and group exhibitions in many venues, including 80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University, New York; ARCO Plaza, Los Angeles, California; Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock; Arizona State University, Phoenix; Art in General, New York; Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York; The Buddy Holly Center, Lubbock, Texas; Centre d’Art et Rencontres, Saint Just en Bellengard, France; Eastern New Mexico University, Portales; Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, New York; Heckscher Museum of Art, New York; Hudson River Museum, Hastings on the Hudson, New York; Islip Art Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Marymount University, San Pedro, California; Ohio State University, Marion; The Painting Center, New York; Paris CONCRET, France; Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York; Sag Harbor Whaling and Historical Museum, Sag Harbor, New York; Spaces, Cleveland, Ohio; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Dever’s paintings are part of notable public collections including Centre d’Art et de Culture, Château d’Escueillens, Saint Just en Bellengard, France; Division Street Editions and The Reutershan Educational Trust, Sag Harbor, New York; The Francis J. Greenburger Collection, New York; Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection; Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, New York; New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, FishBridge Park; Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, New York; and numerous corporate and private collections including the Coca Cola Company, Atlanta, Georgia; Mark Hampton; Sub Zero Freezer Company, Madison, Wisconsin; and Lady Juliet and Somerset de Chair.

¹Baum, Joan. (2012, Aug 30). “When Art Inspires Playwrights,” *The Sag Harbor Express*. Retrieved from <http://www.sagharborexpress.com>.

²Lipson, Karin. (2014, May 4). “Shredded, Sliced, and Covered-Up,” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

³Landes, Jennifer. (2017, Apr 6). “Eric Dever: A Year of Discovery,” *The East Hampton Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.mobileeasthamptonstar.com>.