

CAMERON MARTIN

BASELINE

09.02–10.11.25

Sikkema Malloy Jenkins is pleased to present *Baseline*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and collages by Cameron Martin, on view from September 2 through October 11, 2025. The exhibition's official public reception will be held on Thursday, September 4, from 6–8pm.

How do we read a line? An inexhaustive list of answers could include:

- ~ As the outline of a figure
- ~ As a figure in and of itself
- ~ As a pathway; a trail; a route
- ~ As a glyphic mark
- ~ As writing or signature
- ~ As a stand-in for another gesture

More precisely, we could then ask, how does one locate the significance of a line between—or perhaps beyond—our preconceived understandings of representation and abstraction?

These questions animate Cameron Martin's recent body of acrylic paintings and collages, which embrace the disjunctive gap between what one sees and what one assumes to know about an image. As viewers' perceptions overlap and adjoin, paradoxical notions of handmade mechanization, dimensional flatness, and illustrative abstraction offer a space to mediate these seemingly contradictory forms and processes. The exhibition's title, *Baseline*, foregrounds this openness to interpretation with its own multitude of definitions—including, but not limited to, a starting point for comparison, or a basis for defining change.

Martin's recent works can be viewed within several broad categories of visual information, all concerning linear elements and their compositional relationships. Works such as *Hallmark* (2025) introduce the playful enigma of a calligraphic shape, perched above a horizontal line and floating within a field of overlapping stripes and spheres. The twisted, flourishing figure recalls a familiar lexicon of scripts and signatures, while remaining independent of any definitive symbolic or indexical function. In *Graphic* (2025), a glowing disk in the upper right of the canvas is intercut with slants of negative space, while below it, a solid black line extends from one side of the painting's grid backdrop to the other, tipping downwards into a loop before continuing its path. The dynamic scrawl of the line is counterbalanced by the fixedness of the disk, but the exact nature of their pictorial reciprocity is unresolved.

The perpetual grid reappears in the monumental triptych, *Addendum* (2025), which features richly colored, ribbonlike lines floating over an undulating weave pattern. The spatial relationship between these elements is purposefully ambiguous, straddling planes of indeterminate proximity and depth. Unconstrained by boundary or edge, the ribbons and grid travel across the equidistant gaps separating the panels from one another, casting the connective imagery between each canvas into an unseen presence.

The large-scale paintings *Imprint* (2025) and *Departure* (2024) continue to complicate the figure/ground relationship while drawing upon additional associations of line and form. The twisted, crisscrossing pathways seen in these works are situated amongst other pictorial material including cutout frames, circular apertures, geometric shards, and offset borders. Close looking reveals shadows behind certain forms, but there remains a sense that

SIKKEMA
MALLOY
JENKINS

530 West 22nd Street
New York NY 10011

gallery@smjny.com
212-929-2262

representational ground doesn't fully add up; the constituent parts are intrinsic to the composition of the painting, but not necessarily interdependent. As one spends more time with Martin's work, the initial impact of legibility dissipates into an exploratory terrain of visual phenomena.

Alongside Martin's acrylic canvases, *Baseline* presents a collection of new collage works on paper. These intimately scaled compositions layer preexisting patterns, textures, and color blocks from a variety of found media with geometric shapes and linework. In contrast to his paintings, which seem to appear upon the canvas without a trace of material production, the collages inherently evince a record of their own assembly. This opens further tensions of perception, as the tangibility of Martin's hands-on process shifts, reveals, and conceals itself.

Cameron Martin (b. 1970) received his BA from Brown University and continued his studies at the Whitney Independent Study Program. He has exhibited at venues including the Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri; the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, Washington; the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. His work can be found in the public collections of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, New York; The Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Portland Art Museum, Oregon; the Seattle Art Museum, Washington; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, among others.

Martin is a recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2010), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship (2008), and the Artists at Giverny Fellowship and Residency (2001). In 2024, Martin was appointed F.H. Sellers Professor in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

PRESS CONTACT
Laura Weinthal
laura@smjny.com

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