

MATTEAWAN GALLERY

For Immediate Release:

August Ventimiglia: Borrowed Lines

September 14 – October 5, 2013

Opening Reception Saturday, September 14, 6-9 pm

Beacon, NY, August 28, 2013 - Matteawan Gallery is pleased to present Borrowed Lines, an exhibition of recent works on paper by August Ventimiglia. The exhibition runs through October 5, 2013 and features minimalist works that incorporate found books and chalk line drawings.

Lines appear throughout August Ventimiglia's art, from chalk line drawings, to ink lines cut from the pages of a book, to the lines of glue that remain inside a book cover. Lines are evocative of landscapes, timelines, trajectories, and the mark of a hand at work. Ventimiglia's abstract forms are invested with human social and philosophical references. For example, in *Borrowed Lines from The Meaning of Evolution*, he has cut the underlined passages from an old copy of George Gaylord Simpson's *The Meaning of Evolution*, and has removed all the text, just saving the underlining. He pastes the lines back together into the form of an open book. The meaning and importance of the text has been lost, but the lines that remain create an abstract drawing while referencing the physical act of underlining important passages to better understand and remember them.

In a similar manner, Ventimiglia uses the chalk line, a construction tool, to make drawings that have a physicality to them. His chalk line works are produced by snapping a string coated with blue chalk on paper to create a line drawing. The act of snapping the string causes the dust to settle on both sides, so the drawings are never perfect or alike. The chalk line's wavering edge is a record of the action of making the drawing. You can imagine the impact of the string on paper in the afterimage of dust that has settled there. In his series *Untitled (event study blue series)* the blue line creates the illusion of a horizon in a landscape. This technique is used in various ways, from creating a field of blue in the shape of a circle in *Study for Portal*, to blue lines washing over the page of a book in *Journey's End, Kon-Tiki*. In *Darwin and I*, the blue line bisects a map of the world, crossing over both Charles Darwin's home in England and Ventimiglia's own in Massachusetts.

Ventimiglia's work has roots in process art of the 1960s when artists experimented with non-traditional materials and incorporated improvisation, chance, and the movement of the body in their work. There is a paring down of the image to its most elemental form, an economy of means, in his work that is also reminiscent of minimal and conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s. His work is not a cold minimalism, however, but is infused with a poetic and sensitive view of the world around us. He sees the big picture in small things. For example, *The Story of Mankind* is a paperback book cover with the pages torn out, leaving a jagged line of torn paper between two white covers. In this unassuming work one can see the struggles of human history played out against a white expanse of nothingness. It is no coincidence that Ventimiglia studied anthropology in college; the work in this exhibition has several references to Charles Darwin as well as to the Norwegian explorer and writer Thor Heyerdahl, whose Kon-Tiki expedition crossed the Pacific Ocean from South America to the Polynesian Islands.

August Ventimiglia was born in Maine and currently lives in Wellesley, Massachusetts. He received a B.A. in anthropology from The University of Pennsylvania and briefly studied studio art and theory at the Maine College of Art. Ventimiglia has exhibited nationally, including solo exhibitions at the June Fitzpatrick Gallery in Portland, ME and the Judi Rotenberg Gallery in Boston, MA. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including the *2011 Portland Museum of Art Biennial*, Portland, ME, *An Exchange with Sol Lewitt*, Mass MOCA, North Adams, MA, and the *2010 DeCordova Biennial*, DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA. Ventimiglia's video work *Practice Practice* was shown locally at the Garrison Art Center in 2012 as part of "Therefore I Am", an exhibition of video art curated by Greg Slick, and was also included in the *Artist Statement Picture Show* in Beacon in 2011.