

MATTEAWAN GALLERY

Robert Otto Epstein

ROW BY ROE

July 12 – August 3, 2014

Opening reception Saturday, July 12, 6-9 pm

Matteawan Gallery is pleased to present Robert Otto Epstein: ROW BY ROE. The exhibition runs through August 3, 2014 and features drawings based on knitting designs and paintings on wood panels inspired by baseball cards.

For the past few years, Robert Otto Epstein's work has sought to couple the visual vocabulary of fabric diagrams with the digitization of 1980s-era 8-bit data schemata. His source material is 80s and 90s knitting pattern books for clothing and home décor that he finds online. Using these patterns, he creates a grid on paper and begins to draw, line-by-line and square-by-square, each "pixel" of the pattern. Epstein always proceeds from bottom to top and from left to right, making sure to follow the pattern precisely. Working obsessively, painting each sign and symbol, he pays particular attention to every marker on the "map." In the end, these paintings are as much about the artist's mechanistic process as they are about the finished product.

Epstein's baseball card paintings seem completely abstract at first, with their heavily digitized patterns of rich color blocks; but on closer inspection they reveal their source material. According to Epstein, "there's something poetic and beautiful about baseball. The slow/methodical pace of the game lends to some great storytelling as well. There is an aspect of nostalgia and familiarity in these cards, and it feels as though I'm gazing at old family photos." As with the knitting patterns, Epstein seeks out vintage baseball cards online, adding to the collection in his studio. He then reinterprets the imagery, first by hand drawing a grid onto a wood panel, and then by abstracting the original source by reducing and reassigning color codes to each component square.

Robert Otto Epstein's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions in the US and abroad. He has recently shown at Mulherin + Pollard and Life On Mars in New York, and Frank Juarez Gallery in Sheboygan, WI. In September 2014 his drawings will be included in *Thread Lines* at The Drawing Center in New York. In 2013 Epstein's work appeared in group exhibitions at Maneuvers, Voorkamer, Lier, Belgium; Schema Projects, Brooklyn, NY; Parallel Art Space, Ridgewood, NY; Jack Hanley Gallery, New York; Pierogi Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and Imogen Holloway Gallery, Saugerties, NY. His work has been included in several articles and blogs, including The L Magazine, Make Space, Little Paper Planes, Brown Paper Bag, and Departures Magazine. Epstein was born in Pittsburg, PA and currently lives in Maplewood, NJ.