
CROWDED FIELDS

Solo exhibition featuring Pelle Cass

February 11 – March 21, 2021

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is proud to present *Crowded Fields*, a solo exhibition of photographs by Boston-based artist Pelle Cass. This exhibition features work from two recent series in which the artist combines thousands of images to form one dynamic composition of a sporting event. Working in opposition to traditional sports photography, Pelle Cass aims to capture not the emotion of a moment, but the chaos and physicality of the entire game, evoking a Baroque-like sense of movement and angle in his compositions

Armed with a digital camera and Photoshop skills, Cass sets out to create compositions that redefine our notion of what “street photography” can encompass. Though we see many of these defining elements in Cass’s work - the unscripted, unposed, authentic moments in time - Cass aims to break away from the practice that traditionally catches the subject unaware or photographed without permission. Rather than chasing to capture a singular moment, his work operates as an overwhelming, singular time lapse of an event. In a single glance, a pass is made and caught, a diver exits and enters the water. Teammates interact with each other (or even their own selves) in a way that does not follow the constraints of time, existing on a singular, chaotic plane. Drawing on art historical influences, Pelle Cass writes: “I think, sometimes, of Pollock’s swarms of paint and the coiled musculature of Michelangelo’s figures. I think of floating and flying in space--literal as a high diver and as elusive as the dizzying, disorienting abstract compositions of a Modernist like Malevich.”

Pelle Cass’s complementary body of work, *Uncrowded Fields*, works to evoke these same feelings in the viewer, all the while leaving out one of the most important components of the *Crowded Fields* series: the human subjects. *Uncrowded Fields* shows tennis balls flying without direction, evidence of the human presence and movement without actually including the human figure. The viewer can’t help but to

draw a connection to the world of the pandemic. For so long, we saw an absence of human life, interactions modified for safety, and even the postponing of sporting events. When placed in conversation with a photograph from Cass's *Crowded Fields* series, these balls behave as players that aren't human, but through motion and composition hint towards the human presence.

Pelle Cass (1954) is a photographer from Brookline, Massachusetts. He's exhibited at the George Eastman House, the Albright Knox Gallery, the New Mexico Museum of Art, and the Metamorf Biennial for Art and Technology in Norway and has presented shows at Stux Gallery (Boston), Gallery Kayafas (Boston), and the Houston Center for Photography. His work is owned by the Fogg Art Museum, the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Polaroid Collection, the DeCordova Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the MFA, Houston. Cass's photos have appeared in books such as *Photoviz (Gestalten)*, *Deleuze and the City* (Edinburgh University Press), *Langford's Basic Photography* (Focal Press), *The Beautiful Sparkle: Optical Illusions in Art* (Prestel), and in magazines such as *Beaux Arts* (France), *McSweeney's*, *FOAM*, *GQ*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The Atlantic*, and many others. He's received fellowships from Yaddo, Artists Resource Trust, and the Polaroid Collection.

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