

# BETTY CUNINGHAM GALLERY

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**ABBY LEIGH: *The Eye is the First Circle***  
May 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007  
Opening reception: May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6 – 8 P.M.

On May 3rd, 2007, Betty Cunningham Gallery will open its second show for Abby Leigh. Leigh will be presenting a new body of work titled: *The Eye is the First Circle*. The exhibition includes a selection of drawings and nine paintings.

The title for this exhibition is taken from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Circle" from 1841.

*"The eye is the first circle; the horizon is the second and throughout nature this primary picture is repeated without end."*

This view of the natural world is a fundamental assumption that informs all of Leigh's work.

The works on paper in this show are graphite and pencil representations of imploding or exploding concentric forms. Meticulously drawn they stir the imagination, as though they are the recordings of the births of stars or maybe of single cells.

The paintings hold larger sweeping gestures. The layer upon layer technique that Leigh adopts with her paint creates transparent veils that obscure and reveal the layers beneath, as though one could look through to the deepest ground. Although they are painted from the inside layer out they are perforce observed outside in.

Leigh makes her own paint in the traditional way taking the powdered minerals and mixing them with oil on a marble slab. In this way she can manipulate the viscosity and transparency of her paint which is vital to the effect she achieves. The final stage of these paintings involves close up work as tiny circles are drawn in paint over the entire surface like the pores of the skin.

Abby Leigh works primarily in New York and has exhibited here as well as in Europe since the early 1970's. Her work was included in *Personal Geographies, Contemporary Artists Make Maps*, Hunter College/Times Square Gallery, New York, NY, 2006, *Summer Selections*, Dieu Donné Papermill, New York, NY, 2005 and most recently, *Abby Leigh, Inner Circle*, Evo Gallery, Santa Fe, NM (with David Maisel), February, 2007.

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Her European venues include Midtsønderjyllands Museum, Denmark; the Accademia dei Georgofili, Uffizi Galleries in Florence, Italy; and Galerie 14 Paris, France.

An illustrated catalog with an essay by Thomas Micchelli accompanies the exhibition.

For further information and/or photos please contact the gallery at 212 242 2772 or [info@bettycunninghamgallery.com](mailto:info@bettycunninghamgallery.com)

**Next exhibition: It's All Spiritual: Art from Tribal Cultures: June 7<sup>th</sup> to July 27<sup>th</sup> 2007**