

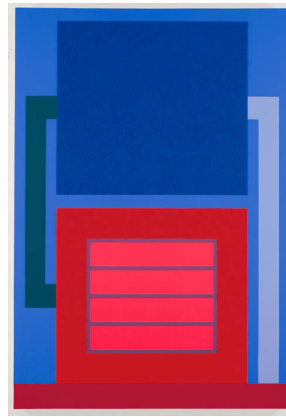
# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **PETER HALLEY**

### **NEW WORK**

#### **3–27 June 2009**

**Monday–Friday 10am–6pm**  
**Saturday 10am–1.30pm**



*Forever* 2009, acrylic, Day-Glo acrylic and Roll-a-Text on canvas  
80 x 55 in / 203.2 x 139.7 cm

“My work is all about the idea of repetition and change”\*

Waddington Galleries are pleased to announce an exhibition of seven new paintings by Peter Halley. The paintings show the continued development of a select group of forms that Halley has been engaged with over the last three decades: “cells”, “conduits”, “windows” and “prisons”. Three of the paintings, “The Unseen” (2009), “Dust” (2009) and “Forever” (2009), draw on the duality of two identically sized cells, placed one above the other, connected in varying ways by conduits. Each element is defined by a single solid vibrant colour. In “Six Prisons” (2009) the cells have no connecting channels, no inflow or outflow. The refined motif of the prison is repeated six times with each prison window painted the same colour as its surrounding background. This gives the appearance of each cell existing within its own autonomous space and opens a dialogue between the individual and the serial, between the painting’s open minimal composition and its confined subject; between the flamboyant Day-Glo paint and its serene application.

Peter Halley has stated that his methodical working practice is organised on the same principles as that of an architect’s office. He begins each work by making a line drawing on the computer. After he has produced a finished drawing he starts to work with colour, using a traditional paint and brush to make a small study. Each colour component of the drawing is then noted so that the study can be translated into a larger painting. A painting such as “Dust” (2009) originates from a small drawing of several inches and is scaled up to a canvas of over six feet.

Based in New York, Halley has explored the connection between 20th Century geometric art and the structure of the modern city since the early 1980s. At that time, the ground floor of the building where he lived on 7th Street had a plain stucco façade and windows fitted with iron bars – this image would become central to his visual language. Halley stated he wanted “to make abstract geometric paintings that had a subject and the abstract square in my painting became a cell or prison, a kind of physical enclosure.”\* Halley’s paintings not only allude to the underlying geometry of the City, designed on a grid plan of right angled-blocks, but also echo the physical surface of municipal buildings with his use of Roll-a-Text. As seen on the painting “Forever” (2009), Roll-a-Text is an additive that, when mixed with paint, adds texture to fill cracks and cover flaws on walls and ceilings. Here the raised surface of textured paint contrasts with the adjacent areas of uniform flatness. It appears as a deep, rolled layer of acrylic “icing” – a contemporary, almost industrial reminiscence of Braque’s practice of mixing sand with oil paint to achieve a rich, tactile finish.

Peter Halley was born in New York City in 1953. He received a B.A. from Yale University in 1975 and an M.F.A. from the University of New Orleans in 1978. He came to critical attention in the early 1980s as part of a group known as the Neo-Geometric Conceptualists, which included Jeff Koons and Ashley Bickerton. It was Halley’s own writing which became the group’s theoretical force and for which in 2001 he received the Frank Jewett Mather Award from the College Art Association in the U.S. He has had solo exhibitions at Musée d’Art Contemporain, Bordeaux (1991); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1992); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1992); Des Moines Art Center (1992); Dallas Museum of Art (1995); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1997); Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, Japan (1998); Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (1998); Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio (1999). His paintings are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate Modern, London; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. In 1996, Halley founded the cultural magazine *Index*. Since 2002, Halley has been Director of Graduate Studies in Painting and Printmaking at the Yale University School of Art.

\* quotation taken from the 2007 TV documentary on Peter Halley, produced as part of the *Artcity* series