

Brad Kahlhamer

Skull Project

27 May - July 2004
opening Thursday 27 May at 19,00

Brad Kahlhamer was born in Tucson, Arizona, in 1956. He lives and works in New York.

galleria francesca kaufmann is presenting **Skull Project**, the third solo show of the native-American painter **Brad Kahlhamer**. On the occasion the artist has developed a large site-specific project whose main character is painting.

The legacy of his native culture is not merely represented by Brad Kahlhamer in his physical appearance, but it is manifests as the vital essence of his artistic practice. As always in fact, Brad Kahlhamer uses painting at the height of its evocative power, shaping painting and drawings that are windows that open on the culture of his ancestors and the symbolical and mystical richness of their world. The artist normally shows overlapping landscapes composed of infinite prairies and rocky peaks on which the over-imposed native's figures seem to emerge from a vision in a trance and totemic animals such as eagles, bears, bison and wolves. Everything formalises in a highly gestural, almost primitive, painting technique. It seems as if Kahlhamer is enacting an archaic ritual in which he symbolically offers in sacrifice the spirits of the cultural essences of his tribe.

Skull project springs from all these suggestions. Pondering on how to relate to the space of the gallery in fact, rather than simply exhibiting the paintings the artist has concentrated on recapturing the mystical experience of the native –Americans. The central point of the show is a small altar composed with objects and candles and surrounded by drawings that open around it like a fan. The scene could be that of a ritual that has just been, all the traits of which are still visible and its energy perceivable. Painting brims out the edges of the paper and canvas to spill over the walls, as the mark of something sacred that has just happened, as the attempt of a sciaman-artist to widen our perception of the landscape beyond the limits of our gaze. 'I want to make the sky bigger' says Kahlhamer, as if he meant he wants to give out the same infinitude perceivable in the prairies in West America or in our wildest dreams. By uniting all these elements the artist is trying to recapture a rich atmosphere full of hints, bringing in the gallery that magical and intense cultural world that is so distant from ours.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact the gallery.