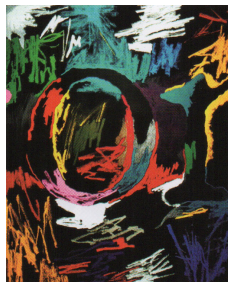


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ARTNEWS

WILLIAM ANASTASI

Stellan Holm: November 20 – January 16



Slowly but surely, William Anastasi has been getting the word out. For the past 30 years, the veteran conceptualist has been making paintings that spell out, in one- to three-letter fragments per canvas, James Joyce's invented 100-letter word that begins "bababaldgh..." the famous thunder-clap in *Finnegans Wake* that represents God's bellow upon Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. Now in his 80s, Anastasi is about a third of his way through the word, and the six paintings here in "The Bababad Paintings" represented his most recent efforts.

Befitting thunder, Anastasi's palette, alive with bursts of Pepto pink and electric reds, yellows, and blues, is vibrant, almost violent. Anastasi is interested in chance operations and applies his paint blindly, but as here, where the colors appear so expertly arranged, that is difficult to believe.

Like many conceptualists, Anastasi has long been issuing himself instructions. (Example: "Construct a corrugated cardboard box. Remove sufficient plaster from a wall to house half of the box horizontally. Fill box; insert.") The "Bababad" paintings can be seen in this context. Lately, Anastasi has gained renewed attention. Two years ago, Hunter College Art Galleries mounted a survey of his sound works to which these paintings clearly relate: reading around the room—"bro," "er," "or"—you had to sound out fractions of Joyce's word. They really say something.

SARAH DOUGLAS

Douglas, Sarah. 'William Anastasi', *ARTnews*, April 2015.

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