

## PRESS RELEASE

Paul Caffell

*Looking/Listening*. Paintings and Platinum Prints

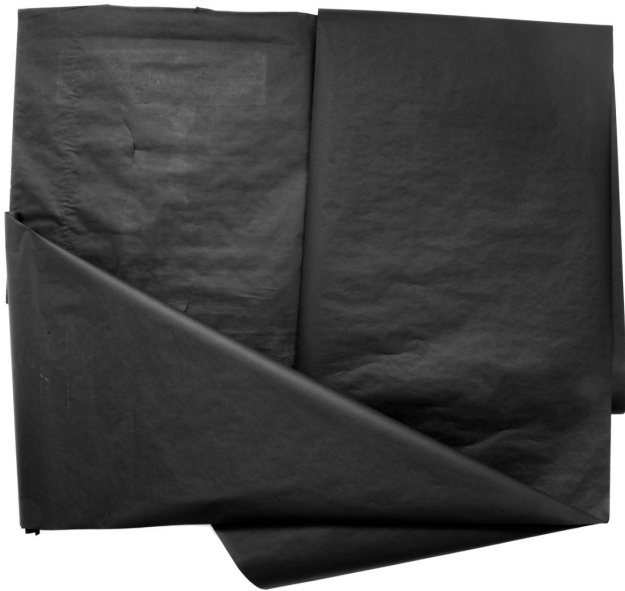
16 November – 23 December 2011



*Painting*, 2010  
Oil on canvas 122 x 122 cm

Paul Caffell's abstract paintings belong to the modernist tradition: they explore the process of mark making, the very language of painting, at the same time as they invoke a sense of intense concentration and stillness. Caffell's work has been inspired by avant-garde music since he began painting in the early 1960s, and belongs to the long search within modernism for an equivalent rhetoric of abstraction for painting. The paintings are at once profoundly gestural and understated, with the marks within an almost monochromatic field often being the product of chance, but nonetheless also being delicate, sensitive and demanding careful work by the spectator to distinguish them. Caffell's work, then, is as much about time as it is about the mark: both the time of the painter, the meditated process of production, and the time of the spectator who, in their attention, is displaced from the everyday impacts of modernity on consciousness into their own wrapt, internal, world of experience with the artwork. Looking at a Caffell painting is much like listening to a chamber work by Kurtág, Henze or Nono, both painter and composer demand intense attention and reward it with a radically different form of consciousness.

Since the 1970s Caffell has also developed a photographic practice. His *Envelopes* and *Expansions*, made with the unique platinum printing process, explore the almost abstract, sculptural properties of simple, easily discarded objects - containers for photographic film and printing paper – through their tonal range. In this sense these photographs are profoundly modernist, in their self-reference to the process of the production of the image, and beautiful, abstract works far removed from the 'realism' of photography. As near-monochromes there is also a clear articulation between the photographs and Caffell's paintings: both demand the same attention to subtle shifts of abstracted form and tone.



*Envelope*, 2010  
Platinum Print. Edition of 6  
71 x 90 cm

*Paul Caffell has been painting since the early 1960s, when as an emerging young artist he was mentored by the leading British modernist critic, collector and painter, Roland Penrose. After exhibiting internationally during the decade, with work being purchased by several important collections, he withdrew to paint privately and developed his photographic practice. Mummery + Schnelle first showed Caffell's work in the group show 'To Become Like Music' in 2008, emphasising the influences and affinities of the paintings in the relationship between music and modernist painting and performance in the post-war avant-garde. His work also featured in Part 2 of the 2011 exhibition "What If It's All True? What Then?, also at Mummery + Schnelle.*

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