

# Los Angeles Times



Bob Law's "Castle XXXIX" at Redling Fine Art (Courtesy Redling Fine Art, photo Gaea Woods / August 13, 2012)

## **Review: Bob Law plays the sophisticated game of art**

### **A considerable painting, lecture**

"Bob Law: *Castle XXXIX*, 1976," at Redling Fine Art, is less an exhibition than an extended proposition. It introduces to L.A. the late British artist's work, but more so his thought. The show contains just one painting that is characteristic of works Law began making in 1960--not coincidentally, the year after a large presentation of American abstraction (Guston, Kline, Newman, Rothko, et al) at the Tate. Law's canvas, roughly a five-foot square, is painted white, with a line, like an internal frame, drawn in ballpoint pen just inside the perimeter.

In 1960, Law (1934-2004) also started to make what he called "blackish" monochrome paintings, and to explore the more metaphysical aspects of art-making. He felt a kinship with Ad Reinhardt, and his musings about art's practice and purpose further link him to those in the '60s and '70s intrigued with perception and phenomenology. Law was given a retrospective at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1978, and another in London a few years ago.

Redling has appended to the show, in the manner of an artist's statement, the text of a lecture Law delivered in 1964 on "The Necessity for Magic in Art." Law skims the history of mark-making, concluding that art is transformational, culturally essential, even if only a sophisticated game that the mind plays with itself "to keep itself surviving." The text makes good reading in the company of the painting, and one quote in particular serves as a perfect caption to the piece. It comes from Roger Fry's "Vision and Design," and ultimately from a child who defined drawing thusly: "First I think, and then I draw a line around my think."

Redling Fine Art, 6757 Santa Monica Blvd., (323) 230-7415, through August 18. Closed Sunday and Monday.  
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