



Houston, Texas
© Pedro Meyer

No content please!

I wonder what is happening in the world of art and culture that an E-mail such as the one I received from the Paul Kopekian Gallery was sent out to their entire mailing list, and no one seems to be particularly surprised.

They write: **"We are looking for work that is not politically charged and has no emotional or other negativity"**

Call for Photographs and Works on Paper

We are looking for photographs and artwork that fall into the following categories:

- 1. Southern California Landscapes (Photographs)*
- 2. Local San Francisco shots (Photographs)*
- 3. Abstract Works on Paper/Photographs*
- 4. General Photography and Works on Paper - mainly landscape*

There are no size limitations for the work. Tryptics and dyptics are acceptable. We are looking for work that is not politically charged and has no emotional or other negativity. We would also like to avoid work that has people in it, especially where faces are close-up or recognizable. The work must be appropriate for a corporate environment.

If you have any series of photographs or artwork that fall into these categories, please email jpegs to the gallery.

Sincerely,

Paul Kopeikin

email: paul@paulkopeikingallery.com

phone: 323-937-0765

The implications are, that there are images that have no content at all. Well, even the abstract work on paper, they are requesting can have serious content, or otherwise the question would be, are they suggesting that all abstract work is devoid of content?

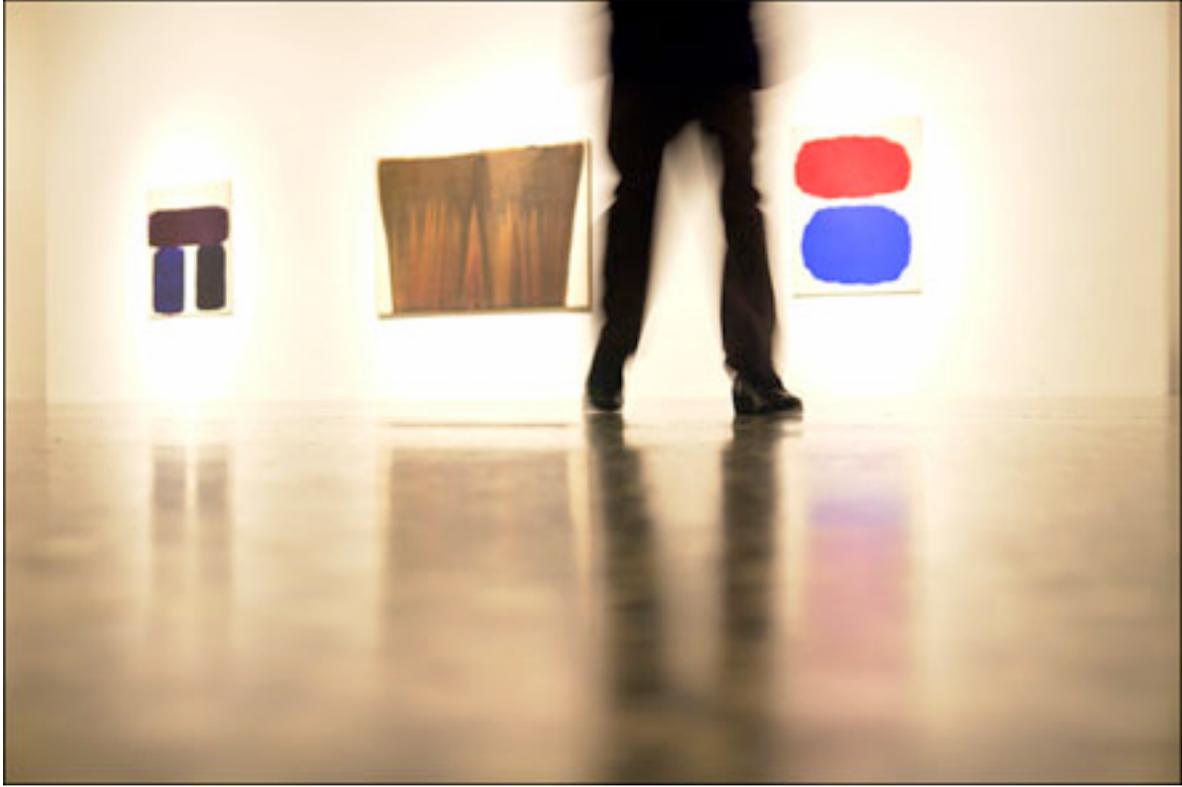
Furthermore, what on earth is this specification of images without people? I was totally bewildered upon reading that they wanted to eliminate people, as if the ideal would be the result of a neutron bomb, an explosion that leaves all material objects intact but is capable of eliminating any trace of life. To suggest as desirable something as nefarious as this, coming from someone in the art world, made me wonder what is happening to culture in the United States of America.

Upon further inspection of the email in question, one comes across another gem: "The work must be appropriate for a corporate environment". I was wondering, what sort of moronic corporation would want to have such art work, defined as devoid of any emotional content. What is the purpose for a corporation to purchase art, if it is not to inspire? or if all they wanted was glorified wall paper, why spend money on so called art through the intermediation of an art gallery, when what they want are objects as far removed from what anyone could define as art.

Lastly I was also focusing on the impact that such a request as that of the Kopekian Gallery could have on a younger generation of photographers, who upon seeing such utter banality as this request, might believe that this is what they have to do with their work in order to be able to sell and be successful. In a very ironic way, I imagine that this sort of negative influence on the photographic community is precisely the political statement Paul Kopekian wanted to avoid by seeking work devoid of emotional content.

You can not get away from it, no matter how much you try, all photography has significant meaning, even the banal stuff the Gallery is requesting. All of this brings to mind some fundamental questions as to what is happening to art in the USA, when a corporation wishing to collect work, comes up with the definition for the art that they want as work devoid of content. Could a corporation really consider that having art that is devoid of meaning, represent their interests best? If so, then we surely can say that such a statement is in itself a political statement. Or does someone consider that a billboard with "Happiness Sold Here" is devoid of meaning? One could argue that there is no negativity in such an image, other than of course, the pathetic statement that suggests that happiness could be purchased.

Pedro Meyer
Coyoacan, March 2006



Museum of Fine Arts
Houston, Texas
© Pedro Meyer, 2006
