



"Incline #2," 2010

Mel Douglas

Blown, coldworked and engraved glass

13⁵/₈" x 14⁷/₈" x 14⁵/₈"

Photo: Stuart Hay

Courtesy: Bullseye Gallery

PORTLAND

Mel Douglas: "Eventide"

at Bullseye Gallery

With a mark-making as fine-grained as the silica from which the glass is made, Mel Douglas inscribes the surfaces of her powerful if understated fused- and blown-glass works. Douglas sands the black surfaces of her panels and vessels to a matte grey, then engraves them with hundreds (sometimes thousands) of lines the width of a pinhead. On landscape works like *Open Field #6*, the marks are continuous parallel lines that when massed, create a curved shape that bleeds across three of the square panel's edges. On works like the giant egg-shaped *Unfurl*, Douglas inscribes the entire, sanded surface with marks that follow the elegant shape's simple contours, as if she were drawing the three-dimensional into two dimensions or recording a conversation between the artist's hand and the curves of the form. It's anti-bravado art in the vein of Agnes Martin who once said of one of her own works, "This painting I like because you can get in there and rest... the absolute trick in life is to find rest."

Because Douglas' works have a visual weight, a gravitas to them, they avoid some of the aesthetic hazards of work made with meticulous, repetitive mark-making; it's not obsession that's on display here, but a peaceful meditativeness embodied in the works. They are, in fact, akin to stones that nature has smoothed by turning and turning them against one another in the surf, grinding their surfaces smooth. Yet, all is not stasis and quiet. *Incline #3* and its sister *Incline #2* imply action: these vase-like vessels, tilted at precarious angles, suggest with their curved bases impending swings in the opposite direction. With this show we catch Douglas not at "Eventide," as indicated by its title, but at dawn, as she too moves in a new direction with works of fused white glass. *Delineate*, which offers ghosted circles on three square panels, is notable for employing the intrinsic properties of white glass to minimalist ends that invoke both Martin and perceptual works of artists like Robert Irwin.

—LISA RADON