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***Surface / Infinity***  
***Vija Celmins, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin***  
**April 4 - May 25, 2012**

NEW YORK, NY – *Surface / Infinity*, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Vija Celmins, Brice Marden and Agnes Martin, will be on view at Craig F. Starr Gallery from April 4 through May 25, 2012. This presentation will focus on how the apparent limitations of flat, self-contained, material surfaces combined with pared down visual vocabularies are still able to paradoxically express a feeling for the infinite.

The exhibition includes a painting and three drawings by Vija Celmins, who throughout her oeuvre has returned again and again to a restricted iconography - in this case ocean views and star fields. By depicting vast expanses with an exceptionally crafted, almost deadpan photorealism, Celmins builds deeply memorable works which are surprisingly expressive. Most of her images, like *Untitled* from 1990, are painted or drawn to the utmost edge of the surface she is working on and seem to extend beyond the canvas and into the space of viewer, while *Long Ocean #5* (1972), a narrow strip of sea floating on a sheet of white paper, expands from its surface towards infinity, only to collapse back upon its own materiality, in a perpetual cycle of optical resonance.

Three graphite and encaustic grid drawings by Brice Marden are also on view. In an interview with Edgar B. Howard in 1976, Marden says, "I've always thought of the grid as a measure or a way of measuring a space and each different grid makes a completely different space, but they're all very similar spaces. Like I think of these drawings as, say, details of that space. I see space as infinite – an infinity with lots of changes, permutations, shifts, plays, happening in it." These shifts and permutations are reflected in the heavily worked surfaces of the wax drawings dating from 1964-1969. The dense blacks make the flat surfaces of paper seem opened up and expansive, visually the opposite of their physical fact.

Agnes Martin's work poetically demonstrates over and over that the grid is infinitely repeatable and variable in proportion and scale, as the two drawings and three paintings on view demonstrate. Martin saw her work as having no discrete forms or illusionistic space, and infused them with a deeply spiritual presence. Inspired by the beauty of her surroundings, Martin's works often reference nature, like *The Peach*, a 72 x 72 inch painting from 1964. Her brilliantly restrained allusions, with their extremely simplified facture, touch on the infinite themes of time and space while still maintaining the elemental physicality of their surfaces.

*Surface / Infinity* is comprised entirely of loans from private collections. A catalogue of the exhibition, which includes an essay by Deanna Petherbridge, author of *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice*, will be available.

Craig F. Starr Gallery is located at 5 East 73rd Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00am to 5:30pm, and by appointment. For general information please view the gallery's website at [www.starr-art.com](http://www.starr-art.com).