

# bernard jacobson gallery

## Summer Show

Open from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Bernard Jacobson Gallery presents its Summer Show: an expansive new group exhibition for the summer season. Amidst aestival motifs and a brilliant colour palette, the exhibition surveys some of the twentieth century's most revolutionary artistic aesthetics and their ongoing influence on the British artists of today.

The display at 8 Golden Square comprises a selection of paintings, prints, sculptures and works on paper by artists Ivor Abrahams, Larry Bell, Georges Braque, Patrick Caulfield, Paul Cézanne, Harold Cohen, Robyn Denny, Robert Dukes, Sam Francis, Alex Katz, Henri Matisse, Bruce McLean, Robert Motherwell, Ben Nicholson, Larry Poons, Frank Stella, William Tillyer and Marc Vaux.

Matisse's Fauvism precipitated dramatic subversions within contemporary artistic discourse. Such vivid colours and boldly experimental forms served as a profound counterpoint to academic traditionalism. As opposed to faithfully depicting reality, Matisse endeavoured to evoke the very essence of the real. His works ventured into the indefinite realms of perception, interiority and emotive expression. Take *Patitcha* and *Patitcha. Masque* (1947)), a striking pairing of aquatints which affirm the potency of simplified form in representing the human subject. With comparable influence, George Braque's Cubism made a radical confrontation of conventional means of depiction. Through the deconstruction, fragmentation and reconfiguration of objective reality, Braque interrogated matters of spatiality and, once again, the idiosyncrasies of perception. Braque's later series of representational *Oiseaux*, such as *L'oiseau et son ombre III* (1961), were a source of inspiration for the acclaimed poet Saint-John Perse. Here, Braque pulls the bird's flight into sharp relief by tracing a geometric shadow in contrasting black. The *Oiseaux* on display exemplify Braque's capacity to assemble evocative compositions in a refined palette.

Motherwell's oeuvre, centred around gestural mark-making and his signature black forms, embody the dynamism of Abstract Expressionism. Motherwell's painterly practice, heavily influenced by European Dadaism and Surrealism, employed abstraction to articulate the most complex of interior states. *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 110C* (1968), for instance, demonstrates the artist's enduring ambition to make visual the deepest of the human

subconscious through automatism. Motherwell spoke of the *Elegies* as his defining 'principle of aesthetics'; his truest representations of a contemporary society he believed was structured by contradiction and conflict – works that play on dualities of geometric and organic, order and chaos, death and life.

The influence of Abstract Expressionism is felt keenly in Sam Francis' works on paper and Larry Poons' acrylic canvasses. *Untitled SF50-001* (1950) sees Francis, a tireless technical innovator, repurpose the ancient medium of egg yolk tempera toward the nascent movement of colour field painting. Standing in contrast to Francis' washes of oceanic blue, Poons' *01AS-2* (2001) builds abstraction through textured strokes of impasto. A summertime palette of raspberry pink, incandescent orange and tropical chartreuse places Poons' canvas in conversation with the works of his American contemporaries: from Alex Katz' portraiture to Frank Stella's mixed media sculptures.

Marc Vaux's early works arose from an infatuation with the likes of Willem de Kooning and Ellsworth Kelly. The British painter has since come to embody a certain intellectual tension between expressive gesturalism and minimalist precision. Take *Trace* (1963), an imposing stretch of midnight blue split down its centre by Vaux's gestural brushstrokes. *Sea Shell* (2019), produced many decades later, brings a spirited use of colour into studied objectivity by imposing geometric boundaries. Likewise, William Tillyer's *The Shore: Line – Study Number 5* (2024) exhibits a dynamic interaction between the natural and the mechanic, as rolling waves crash through Tillyer's signature angular grids. Here, as ever, Tillyer's innovations push at the outer limits of British landscape painting.

Bernard Jacobson Gallery's Summer Show celebrates artistic evolution, offering the opportunity to engage with a vast array of works and the rich histories they have emerged from.

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