

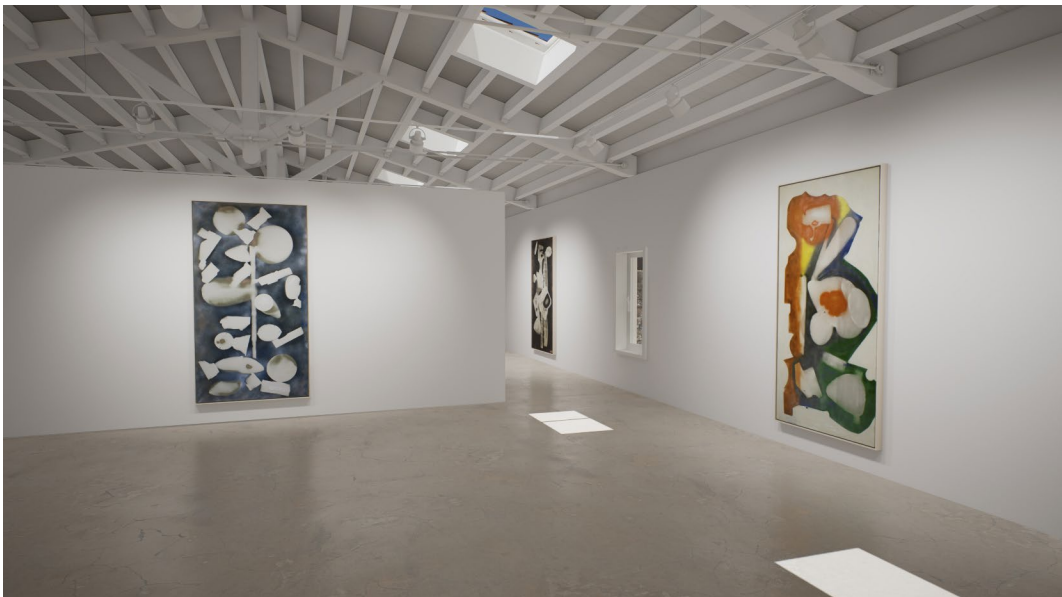
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Press Release

Online Exhibition

David Smith. Sprays



hauserwirth.com

Live Date: 7 July 2020

Hauser & Wirth announces an online exhibition featuring the late post-war American artist David Smith (1906-1965), including six virtual museum loans alongside significant works spanning from 1958 until 1964. 'David Smith. Sprays' is curated by the artist's daughters and co-presidents of the David Smith Estate, Candida and Rebecca Smith, and Dr. Jennifer Field, Executive Director of the David Smith Estate. The pioneering body of work is presented with walkthrough films of the virtual exhibition space created in HWVR.

With thanks to contributing museums: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Harvard Art Museums/ Fogg Museum, Cambridge, MA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco/de Young Museum, San Francisco; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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‘I belong with painters, in a sense; and all my early friends were painters because we all studied together. And I never conceived of myself as anything other than a painter because my work came right through the raised surface and color and objects applied to the surface’. – David Smith, 1960



The in-depth digital presentation celebrates Smith's innovative approach to the newly available medium of aerosol paint and the consequent interplay between colour, form and the drawn image. The Sprays represent a direct and unmediated form of expression that provide a vital counterpoint to Smith's metal work.

When creating a sculpture, Smith would often place components of the work in progress on white-washed areas of his shop floor, before joining them together. The welding scorched the floor, leaving 'ghost' images of the sculpture. Inspired by these incidental patterns, Smith began work on the Sprays, employing any material at hand, from machine parts to tree branches, and even leftovers from his table, which he arranged on paper or canvas before spraying over the composition with industrial enamel paint. When the objects were removed, their silhouettes remained, sometimes with hazy outlines from the diffused paint that seeped beneath the objects' edges. The Sprays can feature bold forms in complex rhythms against misty backgrounds that have been likened to a celestial expanse. They express the ambiguity between positive and negative space, contrasting layers of effervescent colour with areas of white. Shapes can appear weightless, sometimes clustering together and at other times moving apart amidst the sprayed pigments.

Conceived and developed in Bolton Landing, New York, Smith's Sprays were as deeply embedded in the landscape and everyday experiences as his sculpture making. The artist's daughters recall childhood memories from summers they would spend with their father. Candida Smith explains, 'The Sprays were part of our lives just like the rest of my father's artwork, it was intermingled with everything we did all day and what he did in the night after we were asleep'. Rebecca Smith continues, 'From our bedroom my sister and I would hear the particular rattle of his spray cans as he made paintings to jazz records. I see in these works a great sense of what I knew of my father - his love of making and constructing form'.

Smith debuted the large-scale Sprays in New York in Fall 1959. Dr. Field writes about the significance of these works: 'The Sprays' imposing heights align them with the monumental scale that had become a defining

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characteristic of abstract expressionist and colour field painting. The Sprays also connect Smith's painting practice to a new generation of artists who were engaged with issues having to do with the use of found materials (including mass-produced, or readymade, pigments) and mechanical techniques. Indeed, Smith's Sprays would have seemed at home in the groundbreaking '16 Americans' exhibition that opened that December at The Museum of Modern Art, and which featured works by Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Rauschenberg, and Frank Stella.' Since David Smith's tragic death in 1965, he has continued to inspire contemporary artists. The Sprays reflect Smith's unique ability to convey a deeply humanist vision through an abstract vocabulary.

The exhibition follows 'David Smith. Field Work', held at Hauser & Wirth Somerset in Fall 2019 and 'David Smith: Sculpture 1932-1965', a major retrospective at Yorkshire Sculpture Park that ran concurrently and was the principal contribution to the inaugural Yorkshire Sculpture International 2019. The online exhibition precedes a Catalogue Raisonné of David Smith's work, available in 2021.

About the artist

Regarded as one of the most innovative sculptors of his generation, David Smith (1906-1965) was pioneering in his ability to fuse the influences of Surrealism and Cubism, seeking to redefine what sculpture could be for the modern world. Exhibitions devoted to David Smith's sculptures, paintings, and drawings have been presented internationally since the 1950s. Smith represented the United States at the Sao Paulo Biennale in 1951, and at La Biennale di Venezia in 1954 and 1958. His work was included in Documenta II in 1959 and Documenta III in 1964. In 1962, at the invitation of the Italian government, Smith went to Voltri, in Genoa, Italy, and executed 27 sculptures for the Spoleto Festival. A number of retrospectives of Smith's work, have been mounted in the decades since, including at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY (1969, 2006); National Gallery of Art, Washington DC (1982); Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan (1994); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (1996) and Tate Modern, London, England (2006).

Supporting COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization

Hauser & Wirth continues to donate 10% of its gross profits from all online exhibitions to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization, as part of the gallery's ongoing #artforbetter initiative.

To learn more about the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO please visit:
covid19responsefund.org

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Installation view 'David Smith. SPRAYS,' created in HWVR picturing David Smith's 'Circle and Parts on Central Column,' 1959, 'Quixote Don,' 1958-1959 and 'Red Heart,' 1959

Installation view 'David Smith. SPRAYS,' created in HWVR picturing David Smith's 'Untitled,' 1962, 'Untitled,' 1959 and 'Ovals on Stilts,' 1959