

Press Release

Rodney Graham

55 Main Street
East Hampton, NY
September 9 – 26, 2021

For the latest exhibition in East Hampton, Lisson Gallery is pleased to present new paintings by Rodney Graham. Graham pulls at the threads of cultural and intellectual history through multiple mediums including photography, film, music, performance and painting. For this exhibition, the artist's first solo presentation in East Hampton, the new paintings draw on the vocabulary of 20th century art, splicing together different styles, from Braque to Picasso, to Rodchenko and Fontana.

Rodney Graham's paintings are the result of continuing evolution. After revisiting early studies, Graham combined and transformed different elements and shapes from his previous painting series (such as the *Inverted Drip Paintings*, *Psychomania Variations*, and *Possible Abstractions*) to create new compositions. Using Modernism as his inspiration, Graham ventures to mimic the abstract paintings of the post-World War II era. The result, represented in four new paintings in East Hampton, is a layering of textures and the creation of a new style with various new modernist compositions.

Accompanying the new works is a 2007 painting from Rodney Graham's *Wet on Wet* series. Reflecting on the practice of painting itself, this early series features heavy impasto abstractions that rediscover classical modernist tropes without obvious irony. Here, Graham inserts painting into the context of a post-medium practice: the works are an extension of his artistic persona undertaking the act of painting and are inconceivable as separate from it. By exploring this practice, the early work is an extension of Graham's artistic persona in which he plays a modernist painter.

The Graham presentation follows solo exhibitions at the gallery by [Masaomi Yasunaga](#), [Roy Colmer](#), [Leon Polk Smith](#), [Ceal Floyer](#), [Laure Prouvost](#), [Sean Scully](#), [Ryan Gander](#) and [Olga de Amaral](#). Lisson Gallery's East Hampton space will continue its focused format featuring both influential, historical artworks and debuting new bodies of work in an experimental, intimate setting. An exhibition of work by [Wael Shawky](#) will be on view after the Graham presentation, from September 30 – October 17, 2021. The gallery is open to the public each Thursday through Saturday, from 11am to 5pm, Sundays from 11 – 4pm and Wednesdays by appointment.

About Rodney Graham

Rodney Graham presents cyclical narratives that pop with puns and references to literature and philosophy, from Lewis Carroll to Sigmund Freud to Kurt Cobain, with a sense of humor that betrays Graham's footing in the post-punk scene of late 1970s Vancouver. The nine-minute loop *Vexation Island* (1997) presents the artist as a 17th-century sailor, lying unconscious under a coconut tree with a bruise on his head; after eight and a half minutes he gets up and shakes the tree inducing a coconut to fall and knock him out, and for the sequence to start again. Graham returns as a cowboy in *How I Became a Ramblin' Man* (1999) and as both city dandy and country bumpkin in *City Self/Country Self* (2001) – fictional characters all engaged in an endless loop of activity. Such dream states and the ramblings of the unconscious are rooted in Graham's earlier upside-down photographs of oak trees. Inversion, Graham explains, has a logic: 'You don't have to delve very deeply into modern physics to realize that the scientific view holds that the world is really not as it appears. Before the brain rights it, the eye sees a tree upside down in the same way it appears on the glass back of the large format field camera I use.' (2005)

Rodney Graham was born in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada in 1949. He graduated from the University of British Columbia, Burnaby, Canada in 1971 and lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. Solo exhibitions include Serlachius Museum Gösta, Mänttä, Finland (2020); Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany (2017); Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, Netherlands (2017); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2017); Le Constortium, Dijon, France (2016); Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany (2015); Charles H. Scott Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver, Canada (2014); Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2012); Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2011); Museu D'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain (2010); Jeu de Paume, Paris, France (2009); Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, CA, USA (2004); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK (2002); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany (2001); and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (1999). He has participated in group exhibitions such as the Carnegie International (2013), the 13th, 14th and 17th Sydney Biennales, Australia (2002, 2006, 2010), the Whitney Biennial, New York, USA (2006) and the Biennale d'Art contemporain de Lyon, France (2003). He represented Canada at the 47th Venice Biennale, Italy (1997) and among awards he has received the Gershon Iskowitz Prize, Toronto, Canada (2004), the Kurt Schwitters-Preis, Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung, Germany (2006), and the Audain Prize for lifetime achievement in visual arts, British Columbia, Canada (2011). Rodney Graham was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2016 for his contributions to Canadian contemporary art.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, two in New York, one in Shanghai, as well as temporary spaces opened in 2020 in East Hampton and London's Mayfair district. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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