

## Press Release

### Joanna Pousette-Dart *Small Paintings*

July – August 2022  
2/F, 27 Huqiu Road, Huangpu District, Shanghai

For her solo debut in China, the New York-based artist Joanna Pousette-Dart presents 10 new paintings at Lisson Gallery Shanghai. These new works, created specifically for the exhibition, feature paintings that continue to explore the curvilinear format, which are a means of expressing her perceptions of the natural world and have become signature elements of her work. By melding all the components of a painting into an active and dynamic interplay between shape, form, line and colour, the paintings suggest the sense of flux, movement and ambient light one encounters in nature. This presentation follows Pousette-Dart's solo presentation at Lisson Gallery London which was on view from November 2021 until January 2022.

Pousette-Dart grew up in a family steeped in the arts. Her father and grandfather were painters, and her mother and grandmother were poets. The daughter of Richard Pousette-Dart, a well-known member of the first-generation Abstract Expressionists, she absorbed much through osmosis while also drawing her own inspiration from myriad sources, such as Mozarabic manuscripts, Romanesque paintings, Mayan and Islamic art, Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy. Refusing to be defined by one movement or aesthetic, she has pursued her own visual language with a poetic approach to image and format through abstraction. The experience of visiting the Southwestern desert of the United States proved to be a turning point in her work.

Pousette-Dart travelled to New Mexico in the mid-1970 and it became a place to which she constantly returned. In the late 1980s, after spending time working in the environs of the Galisteo Basin, she began to reconceive the structure of her paintings. Being in an enormous expanse, surrounded by distant mountain ranges in each direction, provided Pousette-Dart with an increasing awareness of the primal relationship of figure to horizon, the seeming curvature of vast space and the editing element of one's peripheral vision. In the 1990s, she abandoned the rectangular format and began experimenting with shaped panels, adopting a language of form that evolved out of her perceptions of nature, its vastness, prismatic light, and the ever-changing dialogue between earth and sky.

The configurations of these 10 paintings suggest they are composed of separate panels as seen in Pousette-Dart's larger works, but they are in fact singular panels which visually imply divisions. The drawing of shape and line within the panels resist serial repetition and each painting seems to have its own sense of light and its own particular stance, as though embodying a momentary convergence of elements that might shift and change in the next instant. Amongst the 10 paintings, two are configured in forms with a hollow on either the top or bottom edge of the canvas. Different from Pousette-Dart's typical smooth, long curvaceous lines, the irregularity evokes the shape of clouds or elements of landscape, further extending the formal and poetic exploration at the core of her practice.

The dynamic sense of space and movement in these works is reinforced by Pousette-Dart's manipulation of colour, which shifts subtly in tonality from light to dark or warm to cool. Instead of a fixed palette, there is an identifiable quality of light through the interplay of blues, ambers, oranges, yellows and grays which translates as a carefully orchestrated sequence of change.

All the works presented in this exhibition are untitled, allowing space for individual interpretation. To Pousette-Dart, the power of abstraction is that viewers find their own way to connect with a painting while the harmonic convergences of line, form and colour set off a certain sensory connection which transcends a single meaning.

## About the artist

Born in New York to abstract expressionist painter and founding member of the New York School of painting, Richard Pousette-Dart, and having studied painting at Bennington College in Vermont amongst the likes of Greenbergian Formalists Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitski, Joanna Pousette-Dart's experience as a painter rises from rich tradition. However, despite this traditional modernist background, her paintings remain anything but conventional. Pousette-Dart's shaped paintings are unique in their melding of formal and poetic concerns, and take their inspiration from many sources: Islamic, Mozarabic and Catalan art, Chinese landscape paintings and calligraphy, Mayan and American Indian art, as well as the landscape itself, to name a few. In the early 1970s, Pousette-Dart began living and working intermittently in New Mexico. Her perceptions of the place deeply influenced her paintings, ultimately resulting in the abandonment of a rectangular format in the 1990s for works composed of curved panels. The dynamic configurations of these works evoke the constantly shifting light and form, the vastness of the spaces, and the sense of the earth's curvature that she experienced there. Her paintings take many forms, each with its own dynamic sense of expansion and compression, buoyancy and gravity. The painted contours of the interior shapes create an added complexity, sometimes echoing the contours of the canvas, and at other times challenging them. Her use of color suffuses all elements with a sense of light which feels redolent of the natural world.

Joanna Pousette-Dart was born in New York, NY in 1947, where she still lives and works. She has a BA from Bennington College, Vermont (1968). Her work has been the subject of a recent solo exhibition at Wiesbaden Museum, Wiesbaden, Germany, as well as a three-person exhibition at MoMA PS1 in New York. Pousette-Dart has been featured in group exhibitions at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, USA; School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, USA; Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY, USA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA; and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA, USA, among others. Her work is held in public collections around the world including Albright Knox, Buffalo, NY, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA; Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY, USA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, USA; Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, USA; Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR, USA. In 2021 she was selected to become a National Academician by The National Academy of Design in New York.

## 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, three in New York City, and one in Shanghai, as well as forthcoming galleries in Beijing and Los Angeles. 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. 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, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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