

# What You See Is What You Get

Günther Förg, Giorgio Griffa,  
Mike Henderson, Lily Stockman, Betty Parsons  
05.07.2022  
30.07.2022

In July, MASSIMODECARLO galleries in Milan and Paris are pleased to present a group exhibition: *What You See Is What You Get*, from June 30 to July 29, 2022 at Casa Corbellini-Wasserman in Milan, and from July 5 to 30 at Paris, at MASSMIODECARLO Pièce Unique.

This exhibition is the third in the gallery's series of "investigative" exhibitions. After *MCMXXXIV* (1934) in 2019 and *Portraiture One Century Apart* in 2021, *What You See Is What You Get* brings together ten artists from different generations, origins and practices, to address the state of abstraction today.

In Paris, Günther Förg (1952 - 2013) will be presented in successively dialogues with Betty Parsons (1900 - 1982), Mike Henderson (born in 1954 Independence MI - USA), Giorgio Griffa (born in 1936 Turin, IT) and Lily Stockman (born 1982 Providence, RI - USA).

In a 2010 article for the New York Times, art critic Roberta Smith noted: "it is worth remembering, when considering the ever-expanding definition of abstract art, that the term refers to the act of abstracting oneself *from* reality'.

The remit of this exhibition is twofold: on the one hand, it invites us to take a step back from reality, and on the other, it aspires to take a step forward, to reach a better understanding of abstraction, which seems elude any concise, timeless definition.

Lily Stockman's full, symmetrical and organic forms reflect her fascination and concern for structure and the principles of organization.

Giorgio Griffa, who paints quasi-calligraphic signs on linen canvases without frames nailed to the wall look like flags floating in the gallery space.

Mike Henderson's multidisciplinary career spans music, film and abstract art. Placing textures, shapes and colors at the heart of his compositions,

the work presented in *What You See Is What You Get* illustrate the "instinct for improvisation" that nourishes his production through different mediums.

From Betty Parsons, whose support for abstract expressionism cannot be overstated, to the conceptualism of Günther Förg *What You See Is What You Get* seems to indicate that ultimately abstraction is so much informed by the notion of reality of each artist, that it is a means of escaping it.

As suggested by the title of the exhibition, there is nothing more on each canvas than "what you see" – and yet what "you see" when *you look* remains as multiple, open, and individual as it is... mysteriously abstract.

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## **Günther Förg**

Untitled, 1996, Single Ex.

acrylic on canvas

195 × 225 cm / 76 2/3 × 88 1/2 inches

Günther Förg (1952-2013) was born in Füssen, Germany. Förg's artistic practice began in the early 1970s while he was still studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. His monochromatic "Glitter paintings" were the beginning of his long career, the foundations of his fascination with modernism during a postmodern period. Although Förg's oeuvre is made up of diverse works, all of his artistic output is driven by an obsession with material, spatial, and conceptual concerns.

## **Betty Parsons**

Early Morning, 1967

acrylic on canvas

128.27 × 123.19 cm / 50 1/2 × 48 1/2 inches

Betty Parsons (born 1900, New York, NY - died 1982, Southold, NY) was an abstract painter and sculptor also known as a mid-century art dealer. Throughout her career as a gallery owner, she has pursued her artistic research by creating works in various media, including paintings, sculptures and works on paper.

## **Mike Henderson**

Gate, Time, Balance, 1994

oil on canvas

183 × 152 cm / 72 × 60 inches

Mike Henderson is a pioneering African-American artist, filmmaker and musician, whose vibrant practice spans over fifty years. Born and raised in Marshall, Missouri, he moved to the Bay Area to attend the San Francisco Art Institute in 1965. Henderson earned his MFA from SFAI in 1970 and quickly abandoned his figurative style, increasingly turning to the abstraction. Today, he is known for his highly gestural abstract paintings that demonstrate a palpable connection to post-war abstraction, and an instinct for improvisation.

## **Giorgio Griffa**

Tre colori, 1998

acrylic on canvas

77 × 132 cm / 30 5/16 × 52 inches

Giorgio Griffa (Turin, 1936) was one of the first representatives of Arte Povera, but in 1968 he began to create his own visual language and his own method. Griffa's works are made on a raw frameless canvas that he paints on the same floor. His acrylic compositions are a perfect synthesis between improvisation and method; Employing a performative approach, Griffa uses a visual alphabet composed of repeated pictorial symbols.

## **Lily Stockman**

Blue Morpho, 2022

oil on linen

48 × 36 inches / 122 × 91.5 cm

Lily Stockman (b. 1982 in Providence, Rhode Island) lives and works between Los Angeles and Yucca Valley, California. She draws on her affinity for the natural world and her interest in the principles of organizing structure – from poetic meter to musical form – to create arrangements of biomorphic shapes, planes and boundaries.