

Press Release

SHEILA HICKS: INFINITE POTENTIAL

6 October – 18 November 2023

Opening: Thursday 5 October, 6-8:30 pm



“Hicks revealingly quipped that while it might be the conservator’s job to tame works – to make them stable and fixed – hers, as an artist, must always be to agitate and to keep them alive. These are works that embody Hicks’ sense of nomadic improvisation, never fixed, always open to change and to infinite potential held within a single strand of thread”.

Andrew Bonacina, *Sheila Hicks: Off Grid*, published by The Hepworth Wakefield (2022)

Alison Jacques is pleased to announce ‘Sheila Hicks: Infinite Potential’, the inaugural exhibition of our new gallery at 22 Cork Street, Mayfair.

Advocate and pioneer, internationally acclaimed artist Sheila Hicks (b.1934 Hastings, Nebraska; lives and works in Paris since 1964) has collaborated with Alison Jacques since 2012.

A life journey of working and wandering, deviations from pre-planned paths, Hicks’ thirst and curiosity for innovation and adventure enables her to continue to elevate our perception of humble materials as she places them centre stage. By introducing and transforming the use of new materials, such as banana fibre, stainless steel and pigmented acrylic, Hicks continues to explore the joy and potential of colour while expanding our experience of the possibilities of sculpture.

For ‘Infinite Potential’, Sheila Hicks will exhibit different series of new work which make up her extensive vocabulary. For the first time in London, Hicks will create an installation of *Talking Sticks*, wall based batons made from bamboo and multicoloured pigmented fibre placed as if in conversation with each other. Also on view will be *Mirage in the Oasis* from Hicks’ iconic *Lianes* series; where linen, cotton and silk cordes hang as vines of colour including avocado green, russet orange and gold. New *Comets*, including *Scarlet in Orbit* and *Coincidence*, will burst with colour alongside the consistent presence of

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Minimes – small-scale weavings made on a repurposed frame-turned-loom; metaphorical diaries of the artist’s adventures which often incorporate found objects such as seashells, stones, bones and razor clams. New thread paintings with titles such as *Sunset Contained Forever* will be exhibited alongside *Bas Reliefs*. These include *He, She and More* and *The Shortest Route to Mercy* which reflect Hicks’ new direction and continued experimentation with warp and weft, as well her infinite spectrum of colour.

A new monumental site-specific work upending sculptural and environmental conventions, with echoes of earlier large-scale installations (at the Hayward Gallery, London, the 57th Venice Biennale, and Glasgow International), will inhabit one whole gallery space. As Hicks discussed with the architect David Chipperfield in 2022: “*My great pleasure is that I feel the works and the space become one; they are involved with each other, inextricably linked*”. Environmental responsibility is part of Hicks’ methodology; recycling of materials and packaging go hand in hand with work which changes and morphs from one space to another. Hicks’ intention for her work is ‘*to penetrate time and space*’ and ‘*remain open-ended*’.

In 1956, Sheila Hicks was studying painting at Yale University. She studied pre-Columbian art under George Kubler, author of the influential *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962); Hicks remembers that he ‘*was flashing slides of incredible weavings up on the screen and what caught my interest was their colour, design and shape*.’ The riches of the language Hicks discovered changed the course of her life: she began teaching herself how to weave. ‘*My interest in textiles*’, she said, ‘*didn’t mean I stopped painting – I loved it – but my fascination with coloured lines and inventing pliable two- and three-dimensional structures slowly overtook every other enthusiasm*.’ Hicks has always been faithful to the medium of pigment, expanding its horizons and taking it to new places. ‘*Every material is honoured and respected for its impact and potential*’.

For six decades, Hicks has been expanding fibre’s potential via what she describes as ‘*different investigatory channels*.’ Her extensive travels through South America shaped her formative years. She taught two- and three-dimensional design to architectural students in Chile, moved to Paris where she has lived and worked for the last 59 years, conducted workshops in Mexico, South Africa and Japan, and worked with weavers in Peru, Morocco, India, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Parallel to this was the realisation of major commissions including the Ford Foundation, New York, Fuji City Cultural Centre, Japan and the Fiat Tower, Paris, France.

Hicks first exhibited in London at ‘Woven Forms and Sculpture’, Interiors International, Knoll (1965). Her first UK museum solo presentation was at the Hayward Gallery (2015) where Hicks was the only artist whom Dan Graham has allowed to exhibit within his glass pavilion. Following Hicks’ survey exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield (2022), curated by Andrew Bonacina, subsequent museum solo shows include The Centre Pompidou Malagá and Kunstmuseum LOK St.Gallen (2023). In 2024, Hicks will have solo shows at the Kunsthalle Dusseldorf and Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop, as well as SFMOMA, San Francisco in 2025.

For further information:

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Forthcoming exhibition:

Robert Mapplethorpe: Subject Object Image

30 November – 20 January