

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Jordan Belson: Hidden Formations

May 2 to June 29, 2024

Opening: Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Jordan Belson: Hidden Formations**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 526 West 22nd Street. The exhibition features twenty-nine works on paper made between 1950 and 1965, the majority of which are being shown publicly for the first time.

Jordan Belson (1926–2011) is renowned for his experimental films, in which he explored a profound consciousness and engagement with the observable world through esoteric mystical abstractions. His pioneering approach bridged an equal commitment to science and mysticism. “I’m trying to make pictures that teach you about a knowledge that is beyond words,” Belson said. “The tangibles and intangibles are mixed in the metaphysic. The image as a container of wisdom and knowledge.”

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Belson created scroll paintings with successive images, prepared like film strips. The scrolls were used to produce single-frame animations, a technique Belson continued to employ until the early 1960s. Several of the scrolls on view relate to his seminal early films *Caravan* (1952) and *Mandala* (1953), which he described as “cinematic paintings.” The scrolls portray eclipse-like movements of spheres in brilliant, otherworldly colors. As Belson said, “They parallel the motions of the cosmos. I do everything I can to make everything connect up, to construct real events in an unreal world.”

Belson’s *Brain Drawings*, made in 1952 exhibit both a biological and transcendental curiosity about the brain’s innerworkings and neural pathways. His *Peacock Book* drawings, made in 1952 and 1953, are dense, limitless compositions built up with ink and pastel lines. Although he never exhibited these works during his lifetime, they were imperative for his artistic vision. As Belson said, “I do all my thinking in images.”

Jordan Belson was a seminal figure in twentieth-century avant-garde cinema. He studied painting as a young man, receiving a degree in studio art from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1946. He initially achieved some success as a painter, exhibiting his work at SFMOMA and the Guggenheim Museum in the late 1940s. After 1950, however, he focused primarily on filmmaking, and although he continued to make paintings and drawings for the remainder of his life, he never exhibited this part of his work again during his lifetime.

This exhibition has been organized in association with Raymond Foye and the Estate of Jordan Belson.

Jordan Belson: Hidden Formations is on view at 526 West 22nd Street from May 2 to June 29, 2024, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. On May 5, Anthology Film Archives (32 Second Avenue) and scholar Erik Davis will present a discussion on Belson’s work and a screening of his films, including 16mm prints of *World* (1970), *Light* (1973), and *Music of the Spheres* (1977).

For additional information please call 212-243-0200 or email inquiries@matthewmarks.com.