

# Adrian Morris

Sylvia Kouvali, *London*  
24 April – 30 May 2026

Sylvia Kouvali is delighted to announce the first solo exhibition by British painter Adrian Morris (1929 - 2004) with the gallery.

Born in London, Morris devoted his life to painting while remaining largely outside the mainstream framework of the art world. Over more than five decades he produced a remarkably focused body of work, each painting developed slowly and with rigorous attention to surface, structure and atmosphere.

Growing up during the years of the Second World War, Morris witnessed the global devastation and transformation of the period and its aftermath. This experience shaped his lifelong sensitivity to landscape, architecture and the atmosphere of place, as well as his fascination with the earth's materials and processes.

As a young man, Morris studied in Paris at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière (1950) and later at the Royal Academy Schools between 1951–54. After early success with an exhibition at the Leicester Gallery in 1955 and gaining attention for a substantial presentation of his work in the 1978 Hayward Annual, he gradually distanced himself from formal academic structures and from the commercial art world more broadly. Instead, Morris chose to pursue a private and highly independent approach to painting, with his work seen only by close friends and family.

For much of his life Morris lived and worked in London, where he produced fewer than one hundred paintings, and having developed an idea of painting being comparable to geological movement and life forms, he often spent years refining a single composition. Characterised by intensely stripped down scenes that explore desolate landscapes, apertures, architecture and interior spaces, from the 1960s Morris's work was influenced by themes of space exploration, environmental concerns and man-made or natural disasters. His introspective landscapes and focus on extreme conditions of all kinds, bridge post-war existentialism and the emerging concerns of environmentalism and the cosmic awareness of the time.

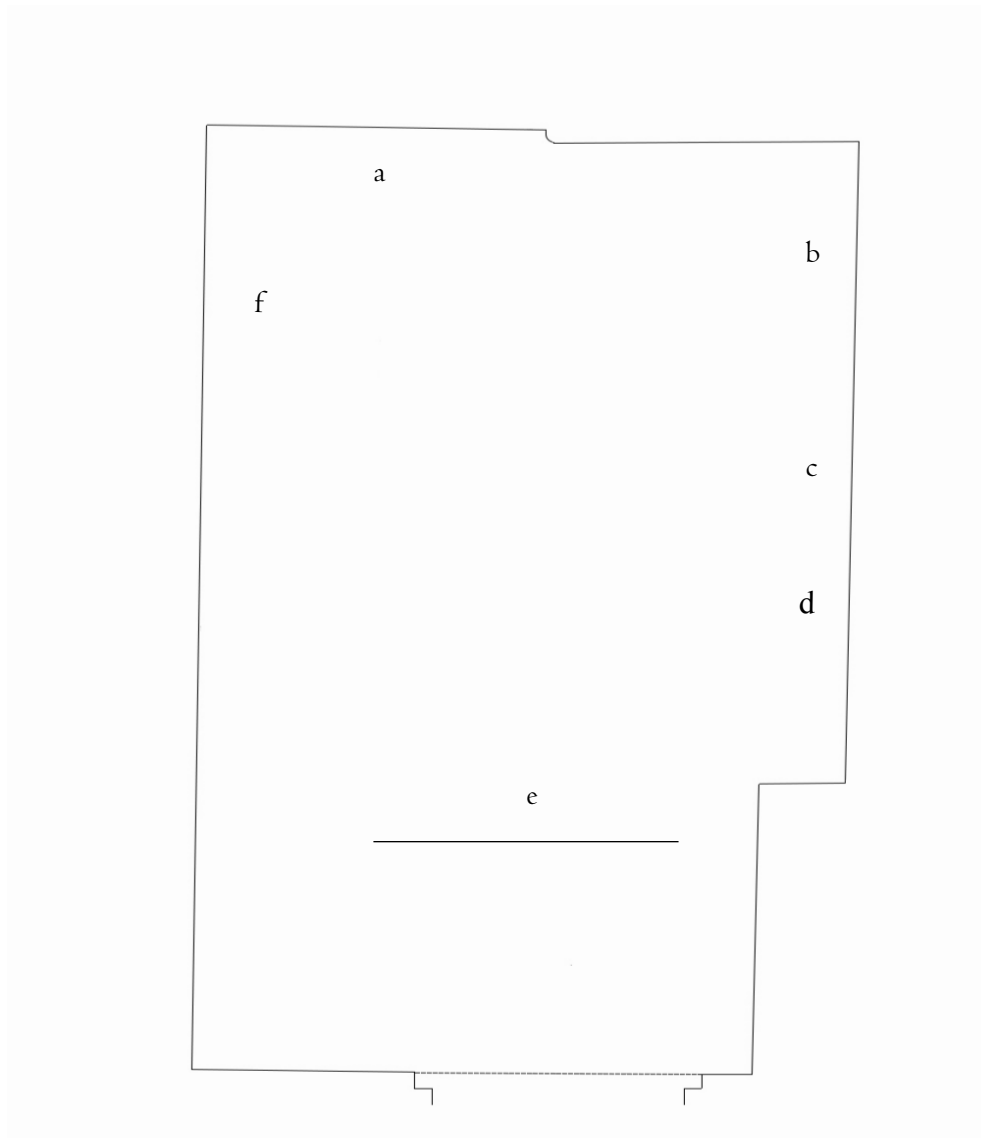
This exhibition focuses on Morris's early and first mature works. Begun in the late 1950s this group was largely assembled by 1967 and charts a formative period where his distinctive visual language began to crystallise. Together, these paintings offer a rare insight into Morris's early explorations of landscape as a psychological and perceptual space, marked by clarity, layered surfaces, and profound stillness.

For nearly all of Morris's works, he studied numerous and varying types of news photography, particularly aerial and architectural images found in newspapers and magazines. These compositions often laid bare barren expanses of land, horizons and planetary terrains and, most notably in the works here, they featured bodies of water, such as irrigation trenches, estuaries and reservoirs.

Technically innovative, these works demonstrate a sensitivity to colour and tonal variation that would further develop and become central to Morris's language. Following a flood at his studio in the early 2000s, he reassessed several of these early works, emphasising the edges of the forms, first with graphite and then with oil paint. Through considered brushwork and a distillation of form, these early landscapes show how his experimentation with light, texture, and spatial depth helped establish the foundations of his later artistic development.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Adrian Morris*, Essex Street, New York (2020); *Adrian Morris, Works 1956–2004*, Galerie Neu, Berlin (2019); *Le Bourgeois*, London (2018); *New Foundations*, 42 Carlton Place, Glasgow (2015); *The Redfern Gallery at 90: An Exhibition*, Redfern Gallery, London (2013); *Landscape*, Redfern Gallery, London, (2012); *Adrian Morris: Works on Paper*, Redfern Gallery, London (2010); *Adrian Morris: Retrospective*, Redfern Gallery, London (2008); *Adrian Morris*, St. George's Gallery, London (1955).

Group exhibitions include *Drawing the Unspeakable*, Towner Eastbourne (2024–2025); Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds (2024); *Mapping Landscapes*, Stoppenbach & Delestre, London (2023); *Letter-like Shapes, Word-like Sequences*, Amanda Wilkinson, London (2023); Boros Collection, Berlin (2022–2026); *Paradis*, Marseille (2021); *Carol Rhodes & Adrian Morris*, Balfron Tower, London (2016); *Hayward Annual*, Hayward Gallery, London (1978); *The Poetic Image*, Hanover Gallery, London (1969); *Winter Exhibition*, Leicester Galleries, London, (1965); *Winter Exhibition*, Leicester Galleries, London (1956); *Artists of Fame and Promise*, Leicester Galleries, London (1955).



- a. **Adrian Morris**, *Airstrip*, 1967, Oil on board, 96 x 71 cm | 37 3/4 x 28 in
- b. **Adrian Morris**, *Foundation/Oil Reservoir*, 1966, Oil on board, 63 x 81 cm | 24 3/4 x 31 7/8 in
- c. **Adrian Morris**, *Irrigation II*, 1966, Oil on board, 63 x 81 cm | 24 3/4 x 31 7/8 in
- d. **Adrian Morris**, *River I*, 1966, Oil on board, 64 x 80 cm | 25 1/4 x 31 1/2 in
- e. **Adrian Morris**, *New Foundations*, 1966, Oil on board, 63 x 81 cm | 24 3/4 x 31 7/8 in
- f. **Adrian Morris**, *Devastated City*, 1965, Oil on board, 98 x 71 cm | 28 x 38 5/8 in