

PRESS RELEASE

The Horizontal

Opens Thursday July 6 from 6–8 pm

Exhibition continues through August 31, 2017



Serge Poliakoff, *Bandes Colorées*, 1937
gouache on paper, 15 x 7 3/4 in

Cheim & Read is pleased to announce *The Horizontal*, a group exhibition exploring the poetics of the horizon in abstract art. The show will feature an intergenerational selection of 21 artists, from modern masters to emerging talent, with works dating from 1937 to today. It will open on July 6 and run through August 31.

The Horizontal will showcase the work of Louise Bourgeois, Louise Fishman, Ron Gorchov, Al Held, Jenny Holzer, Bill Jensen, Ellsworth Kelly, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Prabhavathi Meppayil, Joan Mitchell, Jack Pierson, Serge Poliakoff, Tal R, Sean Scully, Richard Serra, David Smith, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Cy Twombly, Juan Uslé, and Matthew Wong.

The exhibition was inspired by a quotation from Agnes Martin: “Anyone who can sit on a stone in a field awhile can see my painting. Nature is like parting a curtain you go into ... as you would cross an empty beach to look at the ocean.”¹

Martin’s evocation of the ocean, with its stark division between sea and sky, encapsulates the uncanny ability of the horizontal line to reflect nature while retaining the non-referential essence of abstraction. In an *Art in America* interview with Joan Simon, she observed, “My paintings are certainly nonobjective. They’re just horizontal lines. There’s not a hint of nature. And still everybody responds, I think.”²

The exhibition’s touchstone is a vertically oriented, untitled canvas that Martin painted in 1959. Divided into 12 white bands by 11 horizontal lines, it distills the landscape idea into absolute abstraction. Paradoxically, the vertical support of Martin’s painting, like many similarly oriented works in the show, is associated with the traditional “portrait” format, suggesting a realm from which both the figure and the landscape have been scrubbed. The painting thereby refers only to the ideas contained within its edges, yet it is capable of engendering countless associations for the viewer.

The Horizontal includes a number of unfamiliar works from well-known artists, including near-geometric compositions from Louise Bourgeois, Bill Jensen, and Louise Fishman; a densely tactile painting from the 1950s by Al Held; and minimal, gestural patterns from Cy Twombly, Jack Pierson, David Smith, and Joan Mitchell. Works by Juan Uslé, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Richard Serra, and Brice Marden explore a lustrous range of grays and blacks, while Sean Scully and Ellsworth Kelly tap into the emotional nuances of light and color, and Jenny Holzer and Tal R link abstraction to the political, personal, and social. The stacked canvases of Ron Gorchov and the copper strips embedded in the gessoed panels of Prabhavathi Meppayil blur the line between painting and sculpture. And in the colorful bands of Serge Poliakoff and Matthew Wong, whose paintings from 1937 and 2017, respectively, traverse the modern and postmodern eras, the passage of time seems to vanish into the perpetual cycle of the new.

¹ Haskell, Barbara. “Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection.” Agnes Martin. Ed. Barbara Haskell. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1992; 93-117, 109.

² Simon, Joan. “Perfection Is in the Mind: An Interview with Agnes Martin.” *Art in America* 84, no. 5 (May 1996): 82-89, 124.