

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Karel Appel
Out of Nature

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles
September 8–October 27, 2018
Opening reception: Saturday, September 8, 6–8pm

“If Appel’s work says something to the eyes, it would be: do not read me, do not understand me. On this side of the gaze, it shouts instead straight to the body, it lifts it: dance with me, *on* me as on a rhythm, dance me. It does not show itself to sight, it is the weighty organism on which the eye is glued, that it shows and delivers over to the dream of a flight.”

– Jean-François Lyotard (*Karel Appel: A Gesture of Colour*, 1998)

Blum & Poe is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Dutch artist Karel Appel (1921-2006), organized in collaboration with the Karel Appel Foundation. This exhibition is the first devoted to the artist’s work presented on the West Coast, and follows a run of recent retrospectives including *Art as Celebration!*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (2017); *Karel Appel: A Retrospective*, Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, Netherlands (2016); *Karel Appel: A Gesture of Color, Paintings and Sculptures 1947-2004*, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (2016); *Karel Appel: The Abstract Gaze*, Emil Schumacher Museum, Hagen, Germany (2016); and *Karel Appel: Works on paper*, Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, which traveled to Pinakothek der Moderne, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, Munich, Germany.

Rendered in oil on five-foot canvases, the paintings of this series on view at Blum & Poe Los Angeles are each titled *Out of Nature*, completed in New York City in the years 1995-96. This body of work, never before presented collectively to the public, harken back stylistically to a seminal time for Appel in 1950s New York—with large and primal gestural strokes of vibrant colors that vacillate between pure abstraction and representational painting. During that fruitful period, Appel became friendly with Sam Francis, Jackson Pollock, fellow Dutchman Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and other members of the Abstract Expressionist group, as well as jazz luminaries Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Count Basie, and Sarah Vaughan. This circle of cultural producers was sympathetic to Appel’s interest in the immediacy of painterly expression on canvas and would influence the artist’s painting style, oscillating as it were between realism and an emotionally charged, robustly active, and spontaneous abstraction. With these compositions Appel looks back to the influences of this pivotal period of his life, channeling the visual vernacular of the era that broke with the old and heralded in a new form of expression for a humanistic generation grappling with the psychic aftermath of war. The politico-conceptual tenets translated here as artistic practice were hatched in the 1950s, readily engaged in the 1990s when they were revisited by the artist, and are likewise relevant to the pluralistic state of art today.

Appel’s work is represented in public collections internationally, including Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles, France; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague, Netherlands; Hirshhorn Museum and

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Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Musée d'Art Modern et Contemporain, Liege, Belgium; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico; Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, Brazil; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; National Museum of Art, Oslo, Norway; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands; Tate Modern, London, UK; and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; among many others.