

LISSON GALLERY

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Press Release

Peter Joseph

25 January – 2 March 2019

67 Lisson Street, London

Opening: 24 January, 6 – 8pm

“These paintings are vulnerable. They are expressions of what I call feeling, attempts at trying to make sense. I’m simply trying to exist and be honest, hoping that some time I can produce something that people need or want or recognise in some of their own feelings...”
Peter Joseph, 2018

Lisson Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by British artist, Peter Joseph, his seventeenth with the gallery. He is the longest standing artist shown by Lisson Gallery, with his first exhibition in London in 1967, representing over fifty years of collaboration and friendship with the founder, Nicholas Logsdail. Recognised for his early paintings of simple, formally symmetrical shapes in a carefully considered colour palette, the works in this exhibition continue Joseph’s recent experimentation with a looser structure and extend a departure from the closed boundaries of his early work.

At the age of 90 the artist still paints daily from his home, nestled within a steep valley in the Cotswolds, where he contemplates canvases two at a time, until that moment at which he decides the works are ready to leave the studio. The new paintings are rendered in sunny shades of pastel colours with a prevalence of blues, teals and turquoises, balanced between abstract lyricism and evocations of natural phenomena, all with a view to their ultimate expression of some lived feeling, inexplicable to Joseph in any other way than through his paintings.

Often inspired by nature and classical architecture, he approaches his paintings with a consistent conceptual practice similar to that of an architect’s draft. Joseph begins his paintings by studying off-cuts of coloured paper and canvas. In these pieces he works to select two or more tonalities that he finds complement or create an interesting juxtaposition with another. Using this “sketch” he then mixes paint to the same colour as the study, applying it to the canvas in washes of translucent colour. As Joseph notes, “For me, it’s like an architect who makes a drawing on paper in two dimensions and then realises the vision in real space.” The paintings in the exhibition will be accompanied by a selection of these studies, demonstrating Joseph’s process.

Writing on the artist’s new works in a recent catalogue, the New York-based critic and curator Alex Bacon describes: “This sense of things coming together and falling apart, in constant motion while still expressing an ultimate impression of balance and stability is what captivates us when looking at Joseph’s recent work. It is also how I imagine – even if he works intuitively – the artist judges the success or failures of his paintings. Even if there are intellectual issues to be gleaned from these formal considerations, we must start there, with the terms set out by the paintings. To begin with, these means, and our experience of them as viewers, are unabashedly romantic – insofar as they suggest the tone, rather than the shape, of our sensate experience of the world.”

About Peter Joseph

Peter Joseph has, over the course of decades, dedicated his practice to seeking the potential in constraint. He rose to critical acclaim in the 1970s for his meditative, two-colour paintings, which set one rectangle within a frame of a darker shade. These early works are characterised by perfect symmetry, where every decision about colour and proportion can be seen to be redolent of time, mood or place. While comparable to the work of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, Joseph's is an anomalous strain of Minimalism: his allegiance lies as much with Renaissance masters as with his contemporaries. More recently his format has departed from his established 'architecture' to divide the canvas into two planes, horizontally or vertically, wherein loose brushwork, natural tones and patches of exposed canvas tap into new feeling. As Joseph says: "A painting must generate feeling otherwise it is dead".

Peter Joseph was born in London, UK in 1929 and lives and works in Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK. He has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Bernard Bouche, Paris, France (2018, 2015, 2013), Greta Meert Gallery (2015, 2012, 2006, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1993, 1991); Unité d'habitation Le Corbusier, Briey-en-fôret, France (1998); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, UK (1994) and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, USA (1983). He has been included in major group exhibitions at Kinokino, Stavanger, Norway (2018); FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk, France (2014); Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco, France (2013); Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany (2010); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2008); MuHKA, Museum voor Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp, Belgium (2007); Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK (2005); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2002); Fundacao Serralves, Porto, Portugal (1999); Kunstmuseum-Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany (1991); Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany (1984) and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (1977). He won the John Player Painting Competition in 1968.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 61 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as other artists of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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