

# SEVEN FROM THE SEVENTIES

16 JANUARY - 21 FEBRUARY 2015

PRIVATE VIEW  
THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 6 - 8PM

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*Seven from the Seventies* brings together the work of seven influential abstract painters from the decade, featuring Colin Cina, Bernard Cohen, Noel Forster, Derek Hirst, Michael Kidner, Jack Smith and Richard Smith.

Each demonstrates a reductive and disciplined articulation of the sensations of light, form, sound, colour and space. Their ordered, procedural and systematic approach to painting opened up new possibilities for future formal experimentation within abstraction.

During this period, the artistic careers of all seven artists were in the spotlight, exhibiting in important solo and group presentations internationally and at major British institutions including Tate Gallery, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Hayward Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery and the Royal Academy of Arts, London. With prominent roles in British art schools as well as international professorships, their ideas impacted upon a generation of artists.

Michael Kidner's rigorous intellectual approach to colour and form also resonates emotionally: *'Unless you read a painting as a feeling,' he has said, 'then you don't get anything at all'.* *Column No.2 In Front of Its Own Image*, 1972-3 systematically records the grid or lattice formed by the movement of a three dimensional object in space, itself a solid representation of the intersection of two wavy lines. Exploring the complex effects achieved by the arrangement of simple elements according to a set of self-imposed rules, he generated *"visual metaphors for the opposing manifestations of order and disorder in nature."* (Irving Sandler - *Michael Kidner*, Flowers Gallery, 2007).

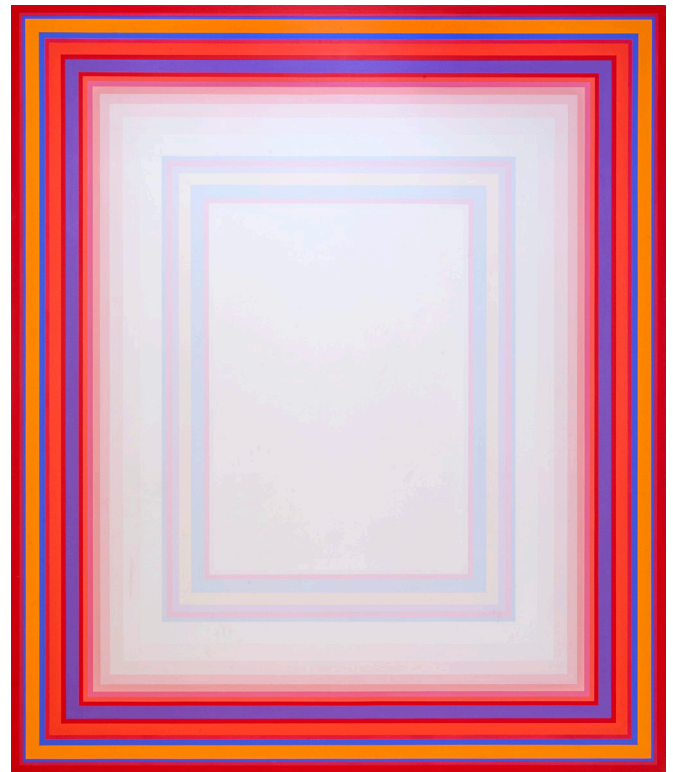
Also concerned with the systematisation of natural forces, Noel Forster's colour fields made up from 'nets' of interwoven colour refer to the energy of which all light and matter is composed. In *Untitled*, 1974 space is described through the dense overlapping of coloured line, each band of colour producing a distinct radiant quality.

Derek Hirst's visual style permuted from precisely calculated, hard-edged colour to a luminous blending of surfaces and tones. Hirst's *Summer*, 1975 connects the image to its own material substance in an expression of both form and space, replicating the rectangular shape of the canvas in glowing bands of colour.

Colin Cina's *MH* series has been described as the artist's *"homage to the rectangle"* (William Feaver - *Art International*, 1972). Finding a sense of freedom within its formal confines, his lyrical coloured panels are rhythmically orchestrated by vertical lines and chevrons, the relational aspect of which set Cina's work apart from much Colour Field painting of the time.

*Like so many younger artists of that epoch in London, most of my paintings then were defiantly big, chromatic works, in loose kinship with those of the New York school of that period - broad and tall and deliberately 'anonymous' with respect to paint-handling. New York was then still in thrall to Clement Greenberg's somewhat uncompromising pronouncements on how a poetic but very new abstract art could be achieved. London's 'hard-edge' painting of that decade was less reverent about the Greenberg approach: you might say, it was more eclectic, more rooted in pioneer Modernist European ideas.*

– Colin Cina



Derek Hirst, *Summer*, 1975, Cryla on canvas, 213 x 183 cm, 82 3/4 x 72 in

Bernard Cohen has described himself as “a storyteller and a creator of pictorial theatre”. Composed of textured applications of layers of paint and interwoven arrays of lines and forms, Cohen's *Resting Place*, 1974-75 represents a complex and vibrating geography, where the artist's exploration of the borderland between order and chaos is evident.

Challenging the structural properties of the canvas and its support, Richard Smith's *Maryland*, 1972 is an example of works that pushed the boundaries of traditional painting into a third dimension by building extensions. Smith produced these works on a large scale, alluding to the monumentality of the billboards that surround the landscape of America.

Recording the composition of sonic alongside optical experience, *Sounds and Silences No.4*, 1970 by Jack Smith demonstrates the artist's use of the formal properties of hieroglyphics and jazz musical notation. Developing new systems of arbitrary signs, Smith created visual form for both the sound of music and the spaces in-between, inviting his works to be 'heard' as well as seen. With an attitude that still resonates today, he is quoted as saying:

*I've heard it said that painting is finished, not to my way of thinking. Abstract painting is still in its infancy; there is so much left to explore.* - Jack Smith

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

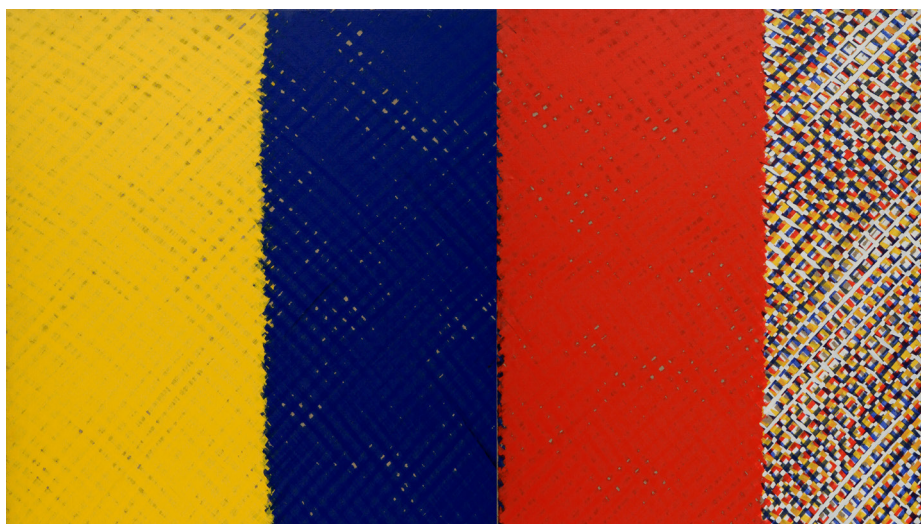
**Colin Cina** (b.1943) has previously shown at the Serpentine Gallery, Whitechapel Gallery, Institute of Contemporary Arts, and Barbican Art Gallery, London. He was the Head of Chelsea school of Art from 1997 until his retirement in 2003. **Bernard Cohen** (b.1933) has shown at Hayward Gallery, Tate Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, the Royal Academy of Arts and Whitechapel Gallery, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. **Derek Hirst** (1930- 2006) exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Camden Art Centre, London; the Museo Municipal, Madrid; and he was included in two exhibitions at Tate Gallery in the 1970s. **Noel Forster** (1932-2007) exhibited at Kunstalle, Basel; Camden Arts Centre, Hayward Gallery and the Royal Academy of Arts, London. **Michael Kidner** (1917-2009) exhibited at the Betty Parsons Gallery, Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Serpentine Gallery, Whitechapel Gallery, Hayward Gallery and the Royal Academy of Arts, London. He was elected as a Royal Academician in 2004. **Jack Smith** (1928-2011) exhibited at Whitechapel Gallery, Serpentine Gallery and Tate Gallery, London. **Richard Smith** (b. 1931) was awarded the prestigious Harkness Fellowship in 1959, which facilitated his move to New York, where he has remained ever since. He has shown at The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; Hayward Gallery, Tate Gallery and the Royal Academy of Arts, London; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

The works of these artists are featured in many international public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum; Arts Council England; the British Council; Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and Tate Gallery, London.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - [Hannah@flowersgallery.com](mailto:Hannah@flowersgallery.com) / 0207 920 7777



Noel Forster, *3 Piece*, 1974, Oil on linen, 152.5 x 304.5 cm, 60 1/4 x 120 in