

**RICHARD SMITH**  
*WORKS ON PAPER*  
*A FORTY YEAR SURVEY*

21 CORK STREET  
LONDON W1S 3LZ

21 MAY - 21 JUNE 2014

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PRIVATE VIEW  
TUESDAY 20 MAY, 6 - 8PM

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*Untitled I (Orange Squares)*, 1996, Acrylic and mixed media on paper, 76 x 112 cm, 30 x 44 1/4 in

Throughout his career, Richard Smith has exhibited solo painting shows at prestigious institutions such as the Tate, Whitechapel Gallery and ICA, London. Flowers will celebrate the artist's lesser known works on paper in a retrospective exhibition covering forty years of his practice.

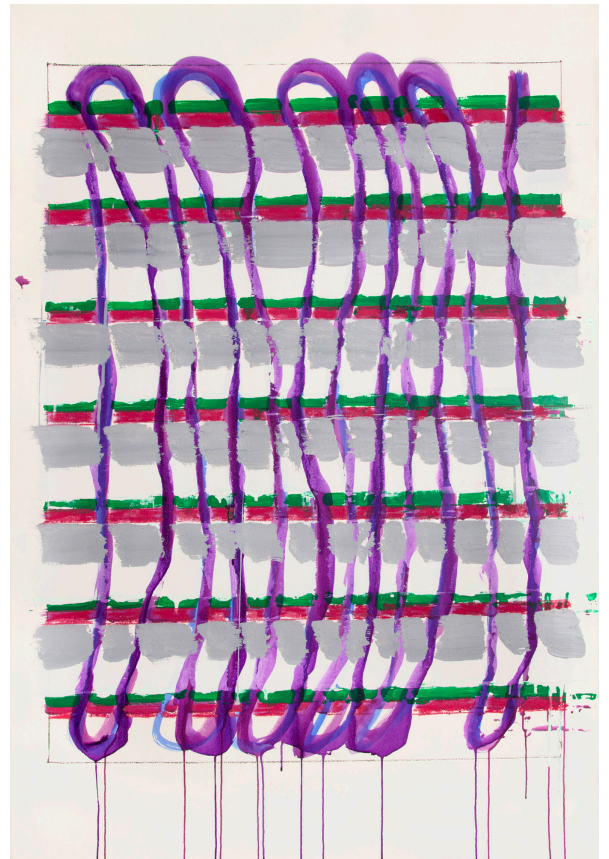
Since the early 1960's Richard Smith has held a unique position between two art historical genres. While his painting style derives from abstract expressionism, his inspiration has come in part from urban billboards, advertisements and commercial packaging - subjects more commonly associated with pop art. Rather than agreeing to define his practice within a single genre, Smith uses colour and form to express the more radiant aspects of contemporary life, combining open and shut, grid-like and nebulous oppositions.

Colour remains central to Richard Smith's practice, and this exhibition reveals his instinctive mastery of the subject over a forty year period. The artist's 'cosmetic colours' of the 1960's, inspired by the persuasive nature of advertising, eventually give way to more positive colour groupings, always combined in an intuitive manner which condenses the artist's sources while simultaneously offering a new pictorial invention.

Together, this body of work exudes a rhythmic musicality in which the artist's colour harmonies can be likened to radio waves pulsating energy. This is perhaps most evident in the untitled compositions on paper of 1997, which incorporate winding brush strokes over more rigid horizontal lines, reminiscent of the staves of sheet music. The human quality and perhaps slightly more care-free application of media in the artist's work on paper convey a state of flux, both in terms of the visual forms which seem to move before the viewer's eyes and in the diverse emotional reactions they inspire.

In the 1960's, Smith gained critical acclaim for extending the boundaries of traditional painting into a third dimension, creating sculptural shaped canvases with monumental presence. Several of the works on display in this exhibition are preparatory studies for such large-scale installations, revealing an intriguing new side to the artist's working practice. *Guernsey Study VII, VIII and IX*, 2009 were produced for 'the gallery' at Grange House as part of the International Artist in Residence Programme, Guernsey. Even within these preliminary drawings, Smith begins to introduce mixed media collage, hinting at the theatrical 3-dimensionality of the final pieces to come.

Similarly, the influence of Smith's famous 'Kite paintings' of the 1970's and 80's, produced using aluminium rods and string to suspend canvases in an impermanent and mobile fashion, can be recognized in his watercolour and mixed media works on paper of 1996. These bold compositions capture abstract forms floating across horizontal bands of colour, playing with the relationship between colour and shape, drawing and structure.



*Untitled VI (Green, Purple, Silver, White)*, 1997, Acrylic and mixed media on paper, 112 x 76 cm, 44 1/4 x, 30 in

Marco Livingstone describes Richard Smith's work on paper as being 'in a state of perpetual blossoming and self-renewal'. It is therefore fitting that this collection will go on display at the height of Spring at Flowers Cork Street space, offering a never before seen overview of the artist's stimulating use of the paper surface.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 40 page full-colour catalogue which includes the essay *A Perpetual Blossoming: Richard Smith's Works On Paper* by art historian, writer and independent curator Marco Livingstone.

The private view for this exhibition will take place on Tuesday 20th May, 6-8pm at Flowers Cork Street. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to [press@flowersgallery.com](mailto:press@flowersgallery.com).

Flowers, 21 Cork Street, London, W1S 3LZ. Tel: +44 (0)20 7439 7766.  
Opening Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10am-6pm

Image credits: *Images courtesy of Flowers Gallery, London and New York*

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## ABOUT RICHARD SMITH

Born in Hertfordshire in 1931, Richard Smith studied at the Royal College of Art, London from 1954-57. In 1959 Smith was awarded the prestigious Harkness Fellowship which facilitated his move to New York, where he has remained ever since.

Smith's work sits in the public collections of the Arts Council of Great Britain, The British Museum, London, Government Art Collection, London, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, TATE Gallery, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool among others.