

TERRY FROST & CAROL ROBERTSON

MIND'S EYE

7 September - 9 October, 2021

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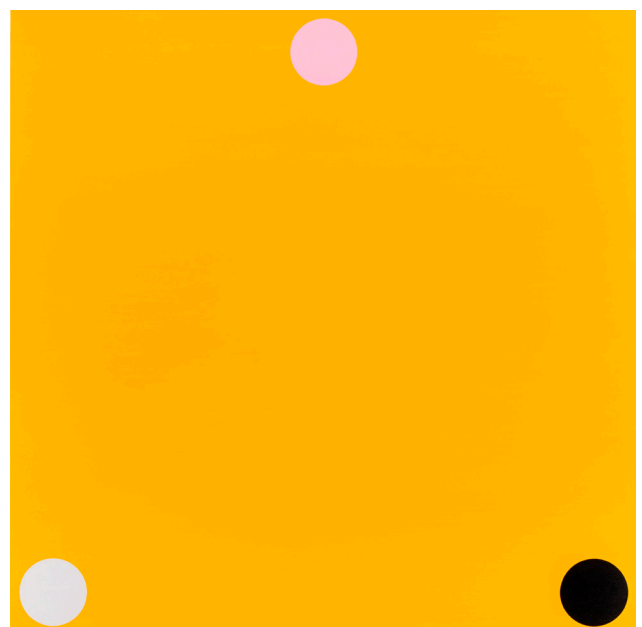
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Flowers Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Terry Frost (1915-2003) and Carol Robertson (b.1955). This exhibition explores a dialogue between each artist's distinctive use of colour and shape, in particular their use of the circle. *"We share a common interest in all things celestial, all things to do with the heavens: the sun the moon, the stars, the circadian rhythm. I think my use of the circle and his use of the circle often coincide,"* says Robertson.

Frost and Robertson first met in Cardiff in the late 1970s when Robertson was a student, introduced by her friend and mentor Adrian Heath, with whom Frost had been interned at a German prisoner of war camp during the Second World War. When Frost died in 2003, Robertson made a dedication to him in a painting called *First Light* (2004), which was shown in the exhibition *Abstract Realities* at Flowers Gallery, and was subsequently purchased for the National Museum of Wales collection.

Terry Frost was renowned for his direct and exuberant handling of colour, which was closely related to the experience of landscape. This connection can be seen clearly in works such as *GT Day* (1999, monotype), and the painting *Innocent Blue* (2003). Carol Robertson describes Frost's painting style as fast, energetic and spontaneous, working freehand, contrasting with Robertson's precise method of drawing with a compass or ruler. She says: *"His touch was expressive, and physical. I work slowly, in a meditative and often meticulous manner."*

While Frost's abstract paintings were often closely aligned with references to the world around him, Robertson's approach, by contrast, tends towards pure abstraction. Her paintings are characterised by a refined and finely nuanced tonal range, harnessing the powerful emotive and spiritual qualities of individual colours to build complex layers of association. She says: *"Like Terry, I use colour subjectively and intuitively, but I frequently modulate it, in order to get exactly the tone and feel I'm looking for. I'm looking for emotional visual impact, just like he was, but it's achieved very differently."*



Terry Frost, *Innocent Blue*, 2003, acrylic collage, 183 x 157.5 cm;
Carol Robertson, *Magic Triangle*, 2020-21, oil on canvas, 168 x 168 cm

At the centre of this exhibition is the painting *Blue Moon* (1998) by Terry Frost. Robertson recalls that *Blue Moon* reminds her of their shared preoccupation with sun, moon and stars, saying, "*he talked of the sun and moon as Gods.*"

In dialogue with this work, *Magic Triangle* (2020-21) by Carol Robertson shares a parallel connection to the transformative potential of geometry and colour. *Magic Triangle* was the first large painting made following the first Covid lockdown. She says: "*I wanted to bring sunshine and light into my studio at a time when the whole world was struggling with the pandemic.*" The painting, with its saturated deep cobalt yellow and lemon yellow ground, is punctuated by three small circles, arranged in a triangular pattern at the centre, and bottom left and right of the canvas. Robertson says, "*It encapsulates all the things I was thinking about, bringing together the square, the triangle and the circle. The 3 circles are isolated, emphasising separation, the spaces between... but ultimately unified and powerful within the triangular formation. Strong and positive.*"

Other paintings by Robertson also demonstrate a relationship to the cosmos, such as *Pointstar - Rigel* (2017) which is one of a substantial series of star paintings made since 2016, and *Listener*, (2021) in which Robertson creates a radiant blue ground to transport the mind into "*deep space*".

Connecting the majority of works in the show is the shared use of black as a defining colour, which in both instances is mixed from other colours, with nuanced permutations. As Robertson describes, "*It offsets and outlines lighter or brighter colours very powerfully. It can inhabit the psychological darkness, but it sets light and colour free around it. It's colours' partner.*"

ABOUT SIR TERRY FROST (RA) (1915-2003)

Over the course of his career, Sir Terry Frost became one of Britain's most prominent abstract artists. Living in Cornwall during the 1950s alongside British Modernist artists Roger Hilton, Patrick Heron, and Peter Lanyon, Frost moved into abstraction, later producing three-dimensional work, and experimenting with collage and constructions.

Frost was born in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire in 1915. During WWII, he served in France, the Middle East and Greece. In June 1941, whilst serving with the commandos in Crete, he was captured and moved through several prisoner of war camps. It was at a camp in Bavaria that he began painting; he described how spiritual insight brought on by hunger awakened his creativity. Once freed, Frost studied at Birmingham College of Art and Camberwell School of Art, London. He became associated with the St Ives group, working as an assistant to Barbara Hepworth. His teaching career led him to Bath Academy of Art, the University of Leeds, Cyprus College of Art and the University of Reading. He was awarded the John Moores Painting Prize in 1965. He became a Royal Academician in 1992 and received a knighthood in 1998. His work has been exhibited widely nationally and internationally, with exhibitions at the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; the Royal Academy, London; Tate St Ives; and Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA.

ABOUT CAROL ROBERTSON

Carol Robertson (b.1955) lives and works in London. She was Research Fellow in Painting at Cardiff School of Art & Design from 2003 - 2008. Her work has been exhibited extensively in the UK and Europe, also in Japan and the USA. Since 2001 she has been a Returning Fellow at the Ballinglen Arts Foundation in Ireland. In 2012 she was artist in residence at the Kunstgarten in Graz, where she made 3D objects for the first time. She is also a prolific printmaker, producing two series of monoprints, *Copán and Edzná* in 2014-5, influenced by a trip to Central America; and her most recent series *Freefall* created in 2018. Robertson was elected Royal West of England Academician in 2018.

For more information and images please contact Hannah Hughes: press@flowersgallery.com

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm or by appointment.

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