

Stern Pissarro Gallery

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Stern Pissarro Gallery (Stand 117B)

BRAFA 2020

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Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 88, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Press Release

Stern Pissarro Gallery will return to BRAFA for the 65th edition in 2020 with a number of exceptional Impressionist, Modern, Post-War and Contemporary artworks.

Owned by the great-granddaughter of Camille Pissarro, Lélia Pissarro and her husband David Stern, the gallery has a fascinating history in representing five generations of Pissarro family artists.

This year, their main highlight will be a rare snow painting by Camille Pissarro entitled *Route Enneigée avec Maison, Environs d'Éragny* completed in 1885 at his home in Éragny. This captivating work showcases Pissarro's brief experiments with Neo-Impressionism in the 1880s combined with his Impressionist mastery.

Stern Pissarro Gallery will offer visitors a range number of other important works by masters such as Alfred Sisley, Marc Chagall, Alexander Calder, Christo and Yayoi Kusama to name a few.

Note to Editors

Established in 1964, Stern Pissarro Gallery has over five decades handled many important works spanning the late 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The gallery works with private, institutional and corporate collectors worldwide to build personalised collections. Headed by David Stern and Lélia Pissarro, the gallery's team of specialists place great importance on building lasting relationships with clients, whether they are new collectors or seasoned buyers.

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Camille Pissarro, *Route Enneigée avec Maison, Environs d'Éragny*

Camille Pissarro was one of the most influential members of the French Impressionist movement and the only artist to participate in all eight Impressionist exhibitions. Pissarro painted *Route Enneigée avec Maison, Environs d'Éragny* in 1885, a year after he moved to Éragny in with his family. The animated strokes and complementary colours are likely to be the visual product of his friendship with Paul Signac and Georges Seurat whom he met in 1885. Pissarro, ever receptive to new styles and techniques, was fascinated by

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their new 'Divisionist' method, known as Pointillism. Despite being in his mid-fifties, Pissarro was inspired by the young innovators and began to experiment with their views on colour theory and method of applying paint in rapid dabs. *Route Enneigée avec Maison, Environs d'Éragny* is a quintessential example of the idyllic landscapes executed during the artist's time in Éragny. Indeed, the works produced in this period formed the subject of an exhibition in 2017 at the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris and are considered some of the finest works of the artist's *oeuvre*.



Yayoi Kusama, *Spirit of Glasses*

At 90 years old, globally renowned Yayoi Kusama continues to hold the record for the most expensive artwork by a living female artist at auction. Her career has spanned decades and her *oeuvre* has included painting, sculpture, printmaking, performance, film, product design and fashion collaborations, but many of her favourite motifs have featured throughout. *Spirit of Glasses* is a rare early work, executed before Kusama has her own studio. The painting plays on one of Kusama's recurring themes: vision. Having suffered from hallucinations since childhood, the glasses in the present work can be seen as a metaphor for the lens through which she sees the world. The lenses are covered in colourful, almost mitochondrial forms, which appear in numerous works. Kusama is also well-known for her immersive *Infinity Rooms*, where the walls are covered in mirrors and the rooms are filled with sparkling lights, giving the viewer the impression of being inside her mind. The glasses in *Spirit of Glasses* invite the viewer to consider whether, if we were to wear the glasses, is this what we would see?



Léopold Survage, *Ville*

After receiving a traditional education at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, Léopold Survage was introduced to modern art through the iconic collections of Russian collectors Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, who supported artists such as Monet, Gauguin, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Matisse. Inspired by these revolutionary works, Survage quickly became one of the principal artists of the Russian avant-garde. In 1908, he exhibited with the cubists at the Salon des Indépendants. This fragmentary, cubist style is immediately recognisable in *Ville*. After his move to Nice, Survage produced highly structured oil paintings featuring a series of recurring motifs such as buildings, theatre curtains and leaves – all sown together with geometric blocks of seemingly unmixed colour.



Eugène Boudin, *Étaples, Sortie des Barques de Pêche*

Best known for his marine paintings, Eugène Boudin was a pioneer of outdoor painting and is regarded as one of the forerunners of the Impressionist movement. As the son of a sea captain, Boudin spent his early years working on his father's steamboat in his hometown of Honfleur, in Normandy, which prompted a lifelong passion for the sea. Inspired by the *en plein air* approach pioneered by the artists of the Barbizon school, Boudin began working directly from nature, frequently visiting the coasts of Northern France, including Étaples, where the present work was executed in 1890. There he depicted animated scenes of ships at sea with dramatic skies, earning him the title 'King of the skies,' by Corot. Today, Boudin is remembered as an important influence on the early Impressionists and an artist who bridged the transition from

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19th century naturalism to late 19th century Impressionism. As well as being found at the Musée Eugène Boudin in Honfleur, his famous waterscapes can be found in the most prestigious museum collections worldwide.



Alfred Sisley, *Bords du Loing*

Alfred Sisley was born in 1839 in Paris but moved to London in 1857 where he became fascinated by the works of Constable and Turner. In Paris Sisley trained alongside Monet and Renoir, meeting to discuss the Impressionist style at the Café Guerbois. In 1874, he showcased his work at the first independent Impressionist exhibition and is consequently considered one of the founder members of Impressionism. *Bords du Loing* was executed in 1890, while Sisley was living in Moret-sur-Loing. His local landscape was a constant source of inspiration and he continued to depict the banks of the Loing throughout the 1880s and 1890s. He was so inspired by the local scenery that in 1882, he wrote to Monet urging him to join him there. Many of Sisley's most famous works were executed while living in Moret-sur-Loing, including *Street in Moret*, *The Bridge at Moret-sur-Loing* and *Allée des peupliers de Moret*.



Jim Dine, *A Smaller Fortress*

While Jim Dine is commonly associated with the Pop Art movement, the artist preferred to identify himself with artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and drew inspiration from Marcel Duchamp's 'ready-mades.' By choosing to depict certain objects that were both commonplace and sentimental, Dine created deeply personal and autobiographical works. Dine has become associated with the objects that he chooses to revisit, particularly the stylised heart, as found in *A Smaller Fortress*. He claimed that the heart was "a template for all my emotions," and frequently depicted Valentine hearts against a background of expressive brushwork. Today Dine's work is found in public collections across the globe and his work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions and retrospectives, including at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the MoMA and the National Gallery of Art in Washington.



Jean Dubuffet, *Site avec 4 Personnages*

Dubuffet executed this dynamic and colourful work in 1981 as part of his *Sites* or *Psycho-Sites* series. Dubuffet's "sites" are composed of fragmented planes of colour and energetic lines, delineating conceptual abstractions of place and prompting the viewer to conjure a mental landscape. Within these *sites*, 'the presence of a human figure gives the place a necessary existence and vitality without which it might remain to the observer merely a network of incomprehensible planes and lines. The figures have the function of a catalyst that triggers the imagination.' Dubuffet worked on this series between 1981 and 1982, experimenting with different compositions. The works in this series enjoyed an early commercial success and were already considered a successful body of work in 1981, when they formed the subject of a prestigious exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, entitled, *Site aux Figurines, Psycho-Sites*. These works have been interpreted as Dubuffet's response to Parisian society after the Second World War, which he felt had been renewed with a sense of optimism and *joie-de-vivre*, qualities that are especially tangible in the present work.

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Jean-Paul Riopelle, *Joute*

Executed in 1956, *Joute* boasts all of the hallmarks of a quintessential work by the Canadian painter Riopelle. With its vibrant palette and thick impasto, it resembles many of Riopelle's most celebrated works. After studying under Paul-Émile Borduas and later forming a group with his teacher and colleagues, known as the Automatistes, Riopelle became one

of the pioneers of the painting with such volumes of layered paint. He would drag these vast quantities of paint across the canvas with a palette knife or trowel, resulting in his characteristic multicoloured cubes and triangles, giving the surface of the canvas an undulating quality formed by peaks and troughs of oil paint. However, Riopelle claimed that his voluminous impasto was unintentional, claiming: "When I begin a painting, I always hope to complete it in a few strokes...but it never works, so I add more, without realising it. I have never wanted to paint thickly, paint tubes are much too expensive. But one way or another, the painting had to be done. When I learn how to paint better, I will paint less thickly."

In these works of Lyrical Abstraction, Riopelle sought to capture the transient state of his subconscious in painterly form. In this way, his artistic practice can be said to borrow from Surrealism, which he became fascinated by after reading Andre Breton's 'Le surrealisme et la peinture' and even hosted his first solo exhibition at the renowned Surrealist haunt, Galerie La Dragonne.



Victor Vasarely, *Farbwelt*

Hungarian artist, Victor Vasarely has long been hailed the founding father of Optical Art and one of the pioneers of Kinetic abstraction. The present work, executed between 1963 and 1973, illustrates these two titles particularly effectively, demonstrating the artist's near-scientific approach to form and colour. His meticulous study of colour theory and adoption of complementary colours is used to great effect in the present work, giving the canvas a jewel-

like appearance. *Farbwelt* is a typically Op Art work. Its psychedelic colours excite the retina and its geometrically precise shapes pulsate with movement. Vasarely's distinctive style was influenced by his early work as a graphic designer in Paris for an advertising firm as well as developments cinema and space travel, which excited his interest in movement, mathematics and optical principles. He sought to free the image from its static form, coining the term 'plastic space' to describe the inner movement and multisensory nature of his works. He used his work to rationalise the complex physics of the universe, stating, 'I cannot stop myself from perceiving an uncanny analogy between my "kinetic plasticity" and the combination of the micro and macro cosmos. Everything is there: Space, Persistence, Corpuscles and Waves, Relations and Field. My art transfers Nature once again, this time that of pure physics, in such a way as to enable a physical understanding of the world.' Last year, Vasarely was celebrated with a major exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, his first retrospective in France in fifty years.