

ALMINE RECH

BRAFA
ART FAIR

BRAFA 2026
Booth 94
Jan 25 - Feb 2, 2026

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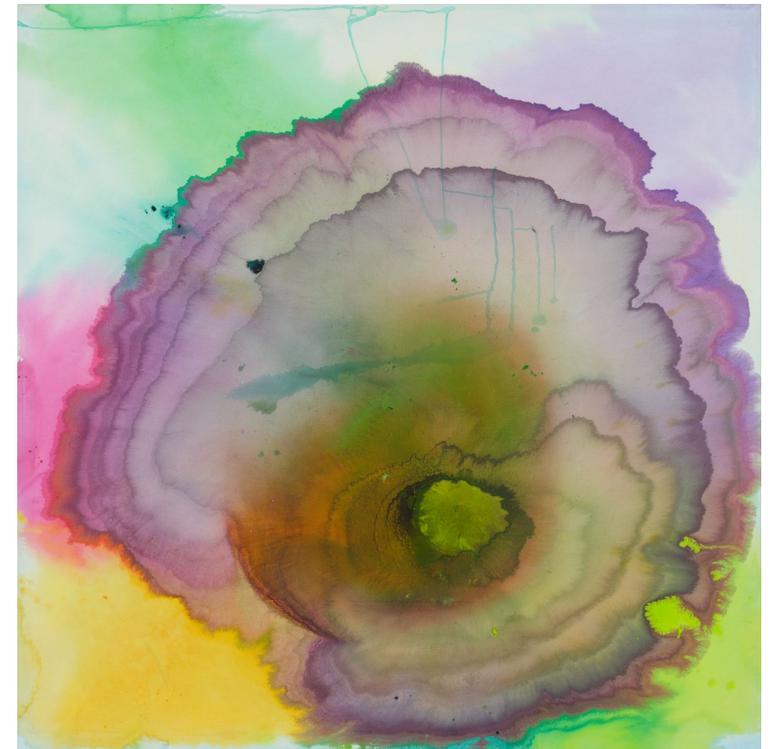
For its first participation at BRAFA, Almine Rech will present a curated selection of modern and contemporary works that reflect the gallery's cross-generational approach, bringing together historical figures and leading contemporary voices.

At the center of the presentation stands *Crow* (2025), a new kinetic sculpture by Belgian artist **Hans Op de Beeck**. Suspended in space, the life-size crow flaps its wings in a slow, rhythmic motion, evoking the illusion of flight. Combining mechanical precision with a quiet sense of melancholy, *Crow* embodies Op de Beeck's poetic exploration of stillness, solitude, and the passage of time.

The booth will also feature a group of historical works by key modern masters: **Pablo Picasso**, with unique engravings (*bons à tirer*) from 1968 and rare ceramic pieces; **Tom Wesselmann**, represented by *Smoker Study (for Smoker #11)* (1972); and **Vivian Springford**, with a vibrant painting from 1973. The presentation will also include significant works by Heinz Mack—including a 1959 relief and a series of ceramics—Johan Creten, with the ceramic *Odore di Femmina*, and works by **Christopher Le Brun**, **Minjung Kim**, and **Ha Chong-Hyun**, among others.

Through this selection, Almine Rech highlights its ongoing dialogue between modern and contemporary creation, and between established masters and artists shaping the language of our time.

Vivian Springford, *Untitled*, c. 1973



Tom Wesselmann

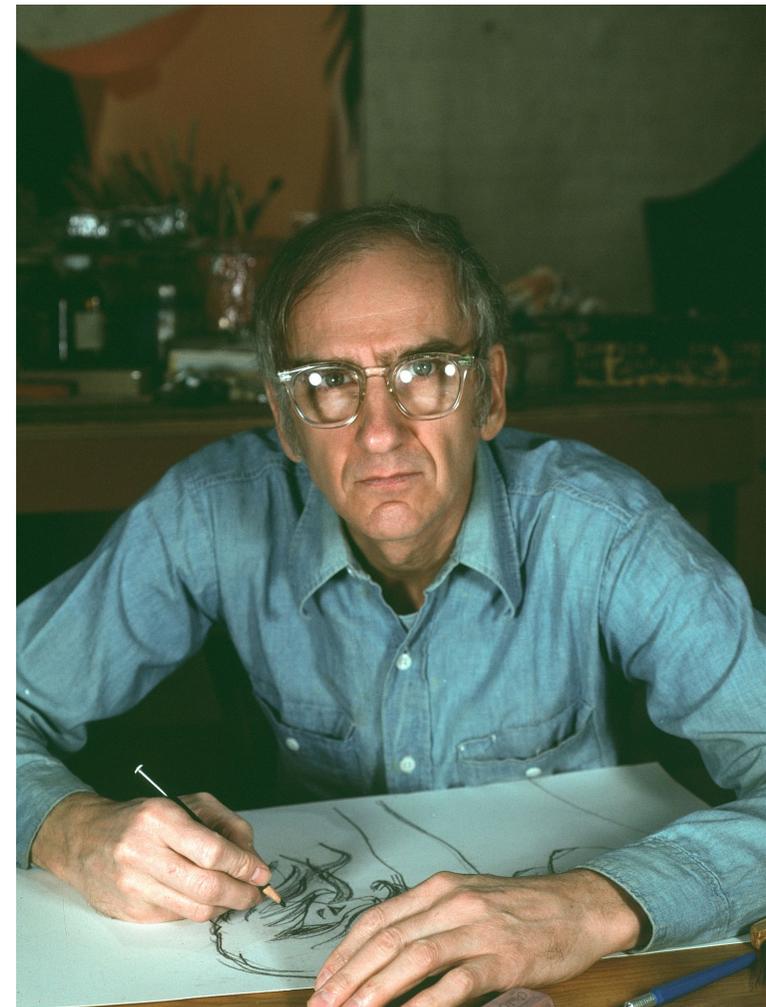
Tom Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 23, 1931. He attended Hiram College in Ohio from 1949 to 1951 before entering the University of Cincinnati. In 1953, his studies were interrupted by a two-year enlistment in the army, during which time he began drawing cartoons. He returned to the university in 1954 and received a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1956. During this time, he decided to pursue a career in cartooning and so enrolled at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. After graduation he moved to New York City, where he was accepted into the Cooper Union and where his focus shifted dramatically to fine art. He received his diploma in 1959.

Tom Wesselmann emerged as a pivotal figure in the American Pop Art movement of the 1960s, setting aside abstract expressionism to embrace classical representations. His art, particularly in nudes, still lifes, and landscapes, carved out a unique niche with its integration of collage elements and assemblages.

These works often included everyday objects and advertising materials, reflecting his ambition to create imagery as impactful as the abstract expressionism he revered. Wesselmann is renowned for his 'American Nude' series, marked by sensuous forms and vibrant colors. His 'Standing Still Life' series of the 1970s, featuring free-standing shaped canvases, magnified intimate objects to an impressive scale, showcasing his innovative approach to art.

Smoker Study (For Smoker #11), 1972 belongs to Tom Wesselmann's Smoker series, which he started working on in the late 1960s. Wesselmann had been developing his 'Great American Nudes' series when he was inspired to focus on specific details of female figures. In a somewhat fetishising act, he started making both smaller preparatory pieces and larger scale works depicting hands, breasts and lips. Out of this approach his 'Mouth' paintings and preparatory works were born.

Tom Wesselmann in his studio, c. 1983
Courtesy of the Estate and Almine Rech / © The Estate of Tom Wesselmann, New York



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Tom Wesselmann

Smoker Study (For Smoker #11), 1972

Oil on canvas

29.2 x 29.2 cm - 11 1/2 x 11 1/2 in (unframed)

46.4 x 46.4 x 3.8 cm - 18 1/4 x 18 1/4 x 1 1/2 in (framed)



Detail of Tom Wesselmann, *Smoker Study (For Smoker #11)*, 1972

Vivian Springford

The American abstract painter Vivian Springford (1913-2003) provides a fascinating case study of a mid-century American woman artist. Working first in an Abstract Expressionist and then in a Color Field vocabulary, she was active in multiple facets of the New York art world from the 1950s to 1970s, during which time she had solo and group exhibitions with the Great Jones Gallery, the Preston Gallery, Women in the Arts, and the Visual Arts Coalition.

With an emphasis on gesture, dripping, and splattering, Springford's works of the 1950s bore a clear connection to Abstract Expressionism. The primary influence of her early work came from East Asian arts and letters, particularly Chinese calligraphy, Taoism and Confucianism. She credited the Chinese-American painter Walasse Ting, whom she met in the mid-1950s, with introducing her to Asian culture. Part of what attracted her about calligraphy as a technique was the fact that it cannot be altered once a mark is made. Her use of this technique resulted in "one-shot" paintings: virtuosic works made in a single go, without alteration or revision.

By 1970 Springford had developed a manner of stain painting that was distinctively her own. Her use of thinned paint on raw or thinly-primed canvas, which she developed with her calligraphic paintings of the late 1950s, developed into more abstract and wash-like marks, with stained colored lines expanding into floods of color. This stylistic approach aligns with the Color Field painters' exploration of stain painting as a primary mode of mark-making.

Vivian Springford's *Untitled*, circa 1973, encapsulates the American painter's expressive, vibrant style. During the late 1960s, Springford had come into her own as an artist. She had developed a signature visual vocabulary and a technique of stain painting to go with it, working with thinned paint to create kaleidoscopic, gestural works.

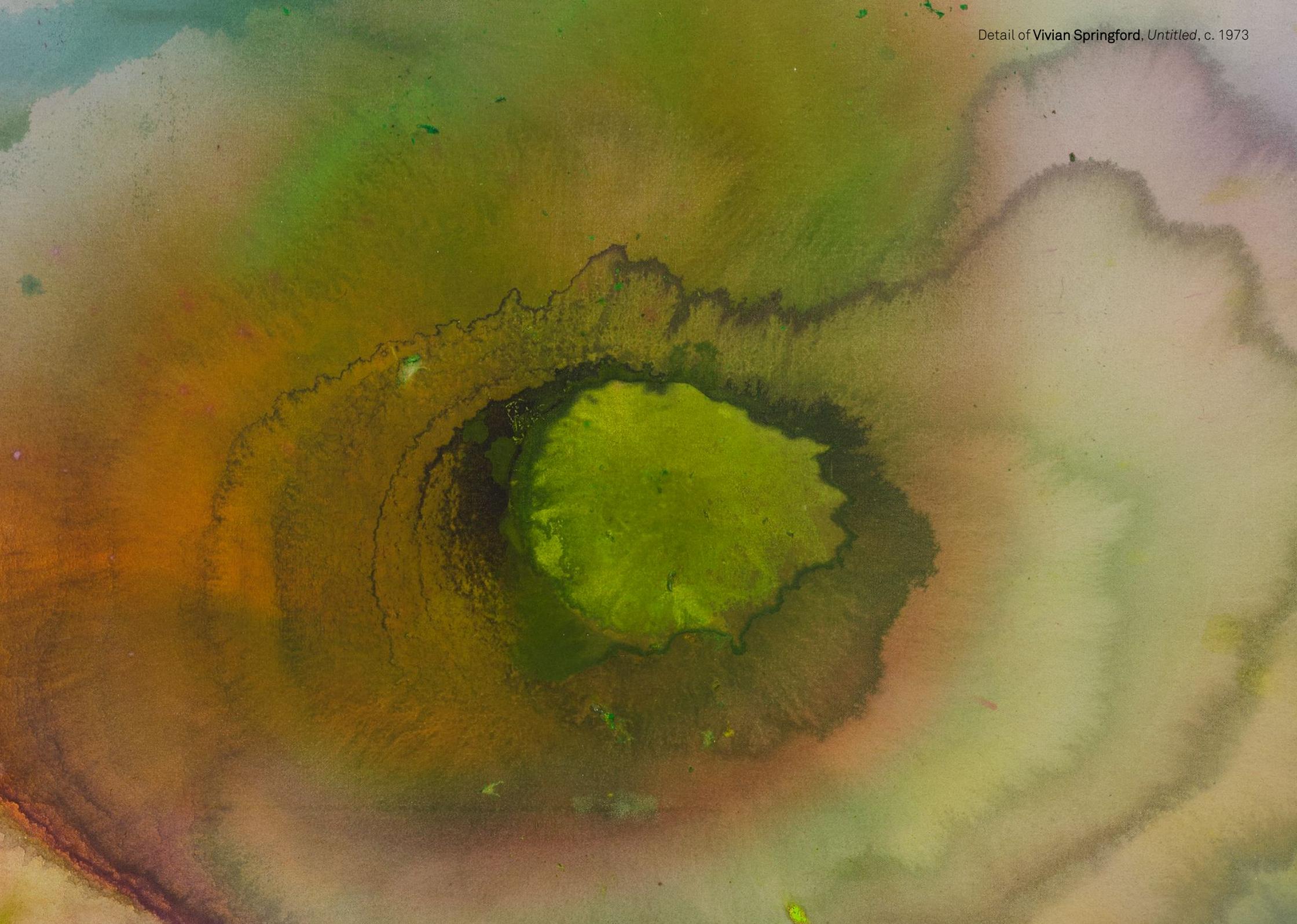
Vivian Springford on the day of learning gunshooting, c. early 1930s
Courtesy of the Estate and Almine Rech / © The Vivian Springford Administration



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Vivian Springford
Untitled, c. 1973
Acrylic on canvas
182.9 x 183.5 x 3.2 cm
72 x 72 1/4 x 1 1/4 in



Hans Op de Beeck

Hans Op de Beeck is a prominent visual artist based in Belgium, known for his extensive international career spanning over two decades. Specializing in a wide range of mediums, Op de Beeck creates sculptures, installations, video art, photography, animated films, drawings, paintings, and short stories. His works explore innovative ways of presenting content through a thoughtful selection of mediums, with each piece reflecting his dedication to presenting the most effective visual narrative.

The scale of his artwork varies dramatically, from intimate watercolors to grand three-dimensional installations that can span up to 600m². This diversity in size and medium underscores the artist's commitment to using the appropriate visual language for each project.

Op de Beeck's work is distinguished by its aesthetic versatility, ranging from minimalist designs to elaborate and exaggerated visuals, all aimed at expressing the core meaning of each piece as clearly as possible. His thematic focus centers on human relationships with time, space, and society.

His captivating and often melancholic images evoke deep reflection, leaving the viewer with a sense of wonder, contemplation, and a lasting connection to the themes of contemporary existence.

Crow (2025) is a kinetic sculpture of a life-size flying crow. Powered by a mechanical system, the crow's flight creates the illusion of forward motion, although it remains suspended in place. 'Crow' evokes the world of fables and classic animated films, in which animals take on human traits. The work also alludes to the age-old tradition of mechanically animated figures, whose repetitive, joyless movements often inspire a quiet melancholy. At the same time, it is striking how lifelike and fluid such mechanically simplified movements can sometimes appear.

Portrait of Hans Op de Beeck, 2025
Courtesy of the Artist and Almine Rech / Photo: Hugard & Vanoverschelde



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Hans Op de Beeck

Crow, 2025

MDF, metal, polyamide, coating and bronze

160 x 56 x 80 cm

63 x 22 x 31 1/2 in

Edition of 5 plus 2 APs



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Hans Op de Beeck

Crow, 2025

MDF, metal, polyamide, coating and bronze

160 x 56 x 80 cm

63 x 22 x 31 1/2 in

Edition of 5 plus 2 APs



Installation view of **Hans Op de Beeck**, *Nocturnal Journey*
Mar 22 — Aug 17, 2025 | KMSKA Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, Belgium