

HUXLEY-PARLOUR

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John Plumb: Liberating Colour

3 July - 27 July 2019

'I am primarily concerned with liberating colour as an emotional factor'

— John Plumb, 1967



Colour Planes, 1971

Huxley-Parlour Gallery are pleased to present an exhibition of works by British artist John Plumb (1927-2008) opening in July 2019. Plumb is recognised as one of the most significant abstract artists working in post-war Britain. The works date from 1963 to 1977, and chart Plumb's radical experiments with colour, chance and improvisation.

The exhibition will contain nine works, including four large-scale colour paintings. The works on display are heavily influenced by American colour field paintings and they explore both planes of solid colour as well as geometry and optics. Plumb spent time in the USA, teaching briefly at the prestigious Bennington College, Vermont. He had affiliations with Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Ellsworth Kelly, and found commonalities with the American sense of scale and ambition. He assimilated the size as well as simplicity and directness of the New York School's aesthetics into his own abstracted compositions.

The early 1970s saw Plumb engaging with improvisation techniques, laying linear grids across his canvases, arbitrarily masked off with tape, and applying paint in whichever random combination he found it on the shelf. The pictorial structures of his works were often also left to chance, with the width and frequency of line determined by the rolling of dice. The exhibition includes a number of his works made using variations of these innovative methods.

John Plumb was born in Luton in 1927. He studied at Luton School of Art (1942-45), the Byam Shaw School (1948-50) and the Central School, now Central Saint Martins, between 1952 and 1955. He showed work at the Artists' International Association abstract exhibitions of 1953 and 1957 and the important *Situation* exhibitions of 1960 and 1961. Other subsequent exhibitions include *British Painting 1974* at the Hayward Gallery and the *Art & the '60s: This was Tomorrow* at the Tate in 2004. His work is held in many public collections including those of Tate, London and The Arts Council Britain.

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