

## Asger Jorn, Per Kirkeby, Tal R

**Private View 6–8pm, Tuesday 22 January 2019**

Exhibition 23 January–23 March 2019

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St George Street, London W1S 1FE



**Tal R, House red, 2018**  
Oil on canvas  
200 x 147 cm, 78 3/4 x 57 7/8 in  
© Tal R  
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London/Venice

**Victoria Miro presents an exhibition celebrating three generations of internationally acclaimed Danish artists:  
Asger Jorn (1914–1973), Per Kirkeby (1938–2018), and Tal R (born 1967).**

Asger Jorn, Per Kirkeby and Tal R are great artist-experimenters. Danish by birth or residence, each has looked simultaneously to Denmark and outwards to international movements and tendencies. United by an insistent materiality and characterised by an energised openness, the paintings and works on paper on view reveal a shared interest in the physical properties and expressive potential of their medium along with a deep understanding of its history and traditions. As emphatic as their command of colour and gesture are the methodologies and frameworks devised by each in order to bring into alignment their wide-ranging interests – including but by no means limited to Nordic mythology (Jorn), geology (Kirkeby) and the liminal space of sleep (Tal R). Non-conformist in attitude, all three can be said to be polymaths of their age, working across a spectrum of genre and media such as artists' books, three-dimensional works and architectural interventions. Yet, as revealed by this concise selection, painting lies at the heart of their practice, the medium proving malleable enough to condense a breadth of knowledge while establishing a dynamic enquiry into figuration and abstraction, spontaneity and control, instinct and intellect.

While Tal R and Kirkeby were acquainted and enjoyed a fruitful exchange of ideas, Kirkeby made a point of not meeting Jorn in person, despite being offered the opportunity of an introduction, mindful perhaps of the adage that one should never meet one's heroes. This exhibition invites us to consider their work as part of a creative dialogue, one that focuses on three Danish artists but, in the end, transcends personal affiliation, geographical location and linear time.

## About the artists

**Asger Jorn** was born Asger Oluf Jørgensen in Vejrum in the western part of Jutland in 1914. At the age of 12, after the death of his father, he relocated with his mother and five siblings to Silkeborg; the largest collection of his paintings can be seen there today in the Museum Jorn. A student of Fernand Léger in Paris, he later studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen between 1936 and 1937, and in that year worked with Le Corbusier at the Paris World Exhibition. In 1945, he changed his name to Asger Jorn and, in 1948, became a co-founder of the international Cobra movement, which was officially disbanded in 1951. In 1957, he was a founding member of the Situationist International in conjunction with figures including Ralph Rumney and Guy Debord. During the course of his career Jorn produced over 2,500 paintings, prints, drawings, ceramics, sculptures, artist's books, collages and tapestries. In addition, he was a prolific writer on subjects including the relationship between art, architecture and life. Major retrospectives have been staged worldwide and his works are held in the collections of museums including MoMA, New York; Tate, UK; and the Reina Sofia National Museum in Madrid, among many others. He died in Aarhus, Denmark in 1973, aged 59.

**Per Kirkeby** was born in Copenhagen in 1938. A painter, sculptor, filmmaker, writer and poet, he studied natural history at the University of Copenhagen in 1957 and graduated there in 1964 with a dissertation on Arctic Quaternary Geology, having participated in several research expeditions to Greenland. By this time, he was part of the experimental art school 'Eks-skolen' (Ex-School) in Copenhagen, where he focused on painting, graphic arts, 8mm films and happenings. Kirkeby's grounding in geology and profound interest in the natural world underpinned his art practice, which was influenced in its early years by Fluxus and Pop Art, and later developed around themes of sedimentation and stratification. He was a professor at the Art Academy in Karlsruhe between 1978 and 1989, and Frankfurter Städelschule from 1989 to 2000. He represented Denmark at the Venice Biennale in 1980, took part in Documenta, Kassel in 1982 and 1992, and has been the subject of major survey exhibitions worldwide, including Tate Modern (2009) and a retrospective of painting and sculpture organised by the Philips Collection, Washington DC (2012). His works are represented in numerous public collections, including Tate, UK; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; MoMA, New York; and Centre Pompidou, Paris. He died in May 2018, aged 79.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1967, **Tal R** moved to Denmark with his family as a child. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, graduating in 2000, and continues to live and work in the city. One of the most influential artists of his generation, he works across a diverse range of media including painting, drawing, print, textiles, sculpture and furniture design. He held a professorship at Kunsthakademie Düsseldorf from 2005 to 2014 and has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at international institutional venues including MOCA Detroit (2018); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark (2007 and 2017); and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2017–2018). Previous solo exhibitions have been staged at venues including ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark (2013–2014); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2013); Kunstverein Augsburg-Holbeinhaus, Augsburg, Germany (2011); Der Kunstverein, Hamburg (2011); Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art, Stockholm (2009); Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht (2008); and Camden Arts Centre, London (2008).

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