

## Art Basel Hong Kong

29–31 March 2019



**Grayson Perry**, *Battle of Britain*, 2017  
Tapestry, 302.7 x 701 cm, 119 1/8 x 276 in  
© Grayson Perry, Courtesy the artist, Paragon | Contemporary Editions Ltd and Victoria Miro, London/Venice

**Victoria Miro participates in Art Basel Hong Kong (Booth 1C 25) with a presentation of works by Doug Aitken, Milton Avery, Jules de Balincourt, Hernan Bas, Peter Doig, Secundino Hernández, Ilse D'Hollander, Yayoi Kusama, Chris Ofili, Grayson Perry, Conrad Shawcross, Do Ho Suh and Sarah Sze.**

**Doug Aitken's** *3...2...1 (things fall apart; the center cannot hold)*, 2017 juxtaposes modern mythology and contemporary reality. The iconic image that features Muhammad Ali, has itself been burned into our collective retinas and frozen as an historic moment in time. This artwork takes the mythology of this moment of struggle and accomplishment but leaves only the outline, the image now drained of its familiar details and content. The image has been replaced and transformed with a modern landscape of neorealism. A collage of everyday signage, unceremonious storefronts and ordinary shelters each struggling for survival are frozen in time yet reach upward, expanding into an open and infinite nighttime sky.

Landscapes by the twentieth-century master **Milton Avery** (1885–1965) include the important late painting *Yellow Grasses, Gray Dune*, 1962. Between 1957 and 1961, Avery spent fruitful summers at the popular artists' colony of Provincetown, Cape Cod, working alongside Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, who regarded Avery as a defining influence and a guiding light. Avery, at the height of his creative powers but by this point in ill health, drew the experience of being on Cape Cod when painting *Yellow Grasses, Gray Dune*, which he completed a year after his final visit to Provincetown. The painting gives an impression of subtle haziness, as if he was remembering the scene with tenderness. The effect is achieved in part by Avery's use of a soft rag rather than a brush to cover large areas of canvas with diluted pigment, softening the contours of his scheme. Two earlier, related works, the oil on canvas *Pale Fields* and gouache on paper *Musical Landscape*, were both completed in the mid-1930s and depict Avery's beloved Vermont landscape. They share a sense of spontaneity and improvisatory abandon, as well as revealing a significant lightening of Avery's palette during this time.

**Jules de Balincourt's** *Those Who Wonder and Wander With The Water and Wind*, 2019, is a new painting by the Brooklyn-based artist that continues an intuitive approach to image-making, where the world we inhabit is filtered through the artist's own psychological landscape. De Balincourt's latest paintings feature a number of recurring motifs: nocturnal landscapes, figures seeking refuge, glowing caves. Everywhere, dreamlike distortions and disconcerting shifts in scale create a sense of eeriness and imbalance. There is an unsettling atmosphere to these new paintings, suggestive of a world in flux. Yet, undeniable too, is a sense of optimism, a persistence of spirit, or a suggestion of how things might be different – with a collective leap of imagination, or if power was held in other hands. How these paintings relate to the current social and political moment is left deliberately ambiguous. Always rich in colour and technique, de Balincourt's work is a bountiful confluence of reality and fantasy, where references to society, politics, or popular culture are never less than equalled by free association and painterly invention.

Works by **Hernan Bas** include *Modern Romantic*, 2019, a new, large-scale painting made especially for Art Basel Hong Kong. Other works by the artist include the recent work *Suicide Sunday (Head above Water)*, 2017, which was completed following a period of research while in residence at Jesus College Cambridge. The work is titled after the notorious after-exams party Suicide Sunday, held in June, and its traditional cardboard boat race, the makeshift nature of the students' boats reflected in Bas's use of packing and duct tape in his evocative collage. A number of watercolour monotypes are on view, including *The 2014 Mr. General Idea Pageant*, 2014, which is drawn from the artist's celebrated *Memphis Living* series – an homage to the designs of the short-lived Memphis Group founded in Milan by architect and designer Ettore Sottsass, which Bas first encountered predominantly through references in pop culture. Two works from the mid-2000s will also be on view: *The Bringer of Bad News*, 2004, and *The Great Fall*, 2005, both of which show the development of the artist's interest in figuring historical and mythological narratives within the imagery and iconography of popular culture, fashion, the decorative arts, queer culture and mysticism.

A painting from the mid-1990s by **Peter Doig** is featured in the presentation. *Downhill*, completed in 1995, is among the artist's celebrated paintings of skiers and winter scenes from this especially fertile period. For Doig, the appearance of snow seems crucial in conjuring a place of the imagination as much as any geographical location and in this work, the presence of snow seems to dramatise slippages between reverie, daydream and memory.. With its carefully limited tonal range and subtle interplay of transparent and opaque paint, *Downhill* describes a world by turns magical and disorientating. It is as if we are being encouraged to devise a route through the image, like a skier at the top of a slope.

The presentation features a new painting by the Spanish artist **Secundino Hernández**. One of the most dynamic painters of his generation, Hernández is celebrated for a spirited enquiry into the language, history and enduring potential of abstraction. This new painting pivots between spontaneity and improvisation, action and reflection. Foregrounding colour and gesture, sometimes partially erased through a process of washing the canvas with a jet of water, the resulting work has a dramatic, exploratory quality and openly displays the triumphs and challenges of the artist's practice. Discussing the tension between calculation and spontaneity in these works, the artist says: 'When the works succeed, I see a dance between pictorial languages and a balance between something which is very much under control and something else which is accidental.'

In her short life, the Belgian artist **Ilse D'Hollander** (1968–1997) created an intelligent, sensual and highly resonant body of work. Her often small-scale canvases and works on paper are charged with references to the everyday. Yet, enlivened by an expressive, though always economical, touch, her work resonates just as strongly as a sustained, self-reflexive enquiry into the act of painting: what it might take to bring an image into being on a bounded, flat plane. Modest in scale, works on view from mid-1990s reveal the quiet ambition of D'Hollander's art, as well as her masterful command of graphic and painterly touch. D'Hollander's work can be read as a series of accumulated impressions, adjustments and layerings – visual records of the artist's thought processes that capture, hold and, often, divert attention. Monochrome or near monochrome fields might be interrupted by blocks of colour; geometric volumes that read as natural or manmade interventions. These in turn might be punctuated by streaks or strokes of paint – applied with a brush or sometimes the artist's hands. It is this sense of crossing and re-crossing the border between outer and inner, actual and symbolic worlds, the eye and the mind, that gives D'Hollander's work its unique presence and invites prolonged consideration.

The presentation will feature *INFINITY-NETS (OPWAN)*, 2012, an example of **Yayoi Kusama's** iconic *Infinity Net* canvases. An enduring feature of Kusama's unique art is the intricate lattice of paint that covers the surface of her *Infinity Net* canvases, the negative spaces between the individual loops of these all-over patterns emerging as delicate polka dots. These motifs have their roots in the hallucinations from

which Kusama has suffered since childhood, in which the world appears to her to be covered with proliferating forms. Forging a path between Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, Kusama first showed her white *Infinity Nets* in New York in the late 1950s to critical acclaim; the work was championed by the first wave of Minimalist artists such as Donald Judd and Frank Stella. Kusama continues to develop their possibilities in monochromatic works which are covered with rhythmically undulating meshes that seem to fluctuate and dissolve as the viewer moves in front of them.

A number of works from **Chris Ofili's** Poolside Magic suite of pastel, charcoal and watercolour works on paper will be on view. Poolside Magic, in which a man in coat-tails serves a naked woman beside a swimming pool, riffs on themes of sexuality, mutability, magic and the occult, making reference to the vibrant and sensuous landscape and culture of Trinidad, where the artist lives and works. Source material for the series includes a photograph of Trinidadian artist Boscoe Holder (1921–2007) at work in his Port of Spain studio. These works are complemented by an earlier painting, Ovid-Lust, 2011–2012, a large-scale work from a substantial suite of paintings and works on paper inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which was exhibited at the National Gallery, London, as part of *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*.

**Grayson Perry** is a great chronicler of contemporary life, drawing us in with wit, affecting sentiment and nostalgia as well as, at times, fear and anger. In his work, Perry tackles subjects that are universally human: identity, gender, social status, sexuality, religion. Autobiographical references can be read in tandem with questions about décor and decorum, class and taste, and the status of the artist versus that of the artisan. Perry is represented by the major, large-scale tapestry *Battle of Britain*, 2017. In this panoramic work, Perry creates a vista not dissimilar to the landscape of Essex that is also, in its composition, redolent of one of Perry's favourite paintings, Battle of Britain, 1941, by the British artist Paul Nash. The work thus weaves in personal references with those alluding to current conflicts within our society.

**Conrad Shawcross** creates sculptures and installations that, imbued with an appearance of scientific rationality, explore subjects that lie on the borders of geometry and philosophy, physics and metaphysics. On view for the first time are a number of new *Manifold* works by the artist. With a height of 45 centimetres, these bronze sculptures are relatively diminutive works by an artist who is gaining a global reputation for extending the possibilities of art in the public realm. Shawcross's *Manifold* sculptures, which draw on the artist's interest in harmonics and the mathematics of music, visualise the precise mathematical ratios of musical chords – such as a major third, perfect fourth or diminished fifth. Using this specific ratio between two notes, and governed by the chord's strict number ratios, rules and logic, each work describes a journey through space as the chord recedes into silence.

Works by **Do Ho Suh** form part of the artist's ongoing *Rubbing/Loving* project, in which rubbings of interior spaces and everyday objects are created in a process that discloses and memorialises details of his surroundings. Suh has visited the STPI Creative Workshop, an internationally renowned resource for artists working with print and paper, several times a year over the past ten years. Light switches, electrical plugs and sockets, a telephone ... created by lining objects with paper and rubbing the surface with coloured pastels, the works on view lend a quiet poetry to the quotidian while laying bare the processes, rational yet sensual, that enable the artist to determine and connect with his surroundings. Reconstructed in three dimensions, the completed works exist at the boundary of drawing and sculpture. They attest to Suh's close relationship with STPI and commemorate his time there.

Widely recognized for challenging the boundaries of painting, installation and architecture, **Sarah Sze's** sculptural practice ranges from slight gestures discovered in hidden spaces to expansive installations that scale walls and colonise architecture. Sze has referred to her small-scale sculptures, such as *Model for Final Thought*, 2015, and *Model for a Suspended Sentence*, 2015, on view at Art Basel Hong Kong, as being discrete models serving as their own temporary site, marking a precisely composed moment. The sculptures, conceived as models of chance occurrences, highlight the tension between the effort to map, dissect and understand information, and the inevitable measure of futility in that effort.

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