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Ralph Humphrey: Monochromes

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Ralph Humphrey: Monochromes*, an exhibition of paintings at **545 West 20th Street**. Opening on September 6, 2018, *Monochromes* is Ralph Humphrey's third exhibition with the gallery. Featuring seven of the artist's lush abstract paintings from the late 1950s, this presentation of early works is the first of its kind in nearly three decades.

The exhibition focuses on the Monochrome paintings, a singularly important, emotionally fraught body of work, created between 1957 and 1960. A single hue dominates the surface of each canvas and is subtly modulated throughout. The allover quality of such paintings as *E.M. #1* (1959) is powerfully affecting, both visually and psychologically. Viewers are compelled to ponder their existence when confronted with the quiet vibration of the paintings' surface. Interviewed in *Arts Magazine* in 1975, Humphrey explained to Priscilla Colt, "The core of my work is contemplative. The object becomes a meditation on time, space, and light." In all their variety, these monochromes emit a restless energy, drawing spectators closer and closer.

In 1960, Donald Judd reviewed Humphrey's first exhibition of this body of work at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, noting the following: "This is Purism of a sort, in which generality does not contain variables but excludes them, in which the basic diagram or color, the only continuity, is exposed, here the essence of a confused sequence of perceptions... The sensations of blue-black, not a color's seemingly logical relation to a complementary, or its suggested position in a fixed scheme, are refined, reduced to a single blue-black, expanded in size, and given a little of the variation and tone of the visual world and attendant emotions." To be sure, though seemingly simplistic at first glance, these paintings insist on a protracted, exhaustive visual experience.

Born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1932, Ralph Humphrey studied painting at Youngstown University. In 1957, Humphrey relocated to New York, where he met artists Theodoros Stamos and Mark Rothko. Rothko's fierce opinions and strong, personal emotionalism were major influences on the young artist—ones that continued throughout his career. From 1966 to 1990, Humphrey taught painting in the graduate art department at Hunter College. He remained at Hunter until his death in 1990.



West End, 1959

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, Humphrey had solo exhibitions at many influential galleries, including: Tibor de Nagy Gallery (1959, 1960, New York), Green Gallery (1965, New York), Bykert Gallery (1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, New York), Texas Gallery (1973, Houston), Daniel Weinberg Gallery (1974, 1976, 1982, San Francisco), John Weber Gallery (1976, 1977, New York), Willard Gallery (1980, 1982, 1984, New York), Daniel Weinberg Gallery (1983, 1986, 1990, Los Angeles), Jay Gorney Modern Art (1987, New York), and Mary Boone Gallery (1990, New York). During this period, his work was also featured in many important museum exhibitions, such as *Abstract Expressionists and Imagists* (1961, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), *Systemic Painting* (1965, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), *A Romantic Minimalism* (1968, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia), *A View of a Decade* (1977, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago), *Painting in Relief* (1980, Whitney Museum of American Art), and *The Meditative Surface* (1984, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago), among others. More recently, Humphrey's work appeared in *A Minimal Future?: Art as Object, 1958–1968* (2004, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) and *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975* (2006, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro).

Humphrey's work is in the collections of major museums around the world, including: the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Smithsonian American Art Museum; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; the Walker Art Center; the Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent the Estate of **Ralph Humphrey**.

Ralph Humphrey: Monochromes will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through **Saturday, October 20, 2018**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information, **please contact the gallery at (212) 929-1351, or email garth@garthgreenan.com**.

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