

Between Tachisme and Abstract Expressionism: Bluhm, Francis, Jenkins

5 October - 10 November, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, 5 October, 6-8pm

Location: 521 West 26th Street

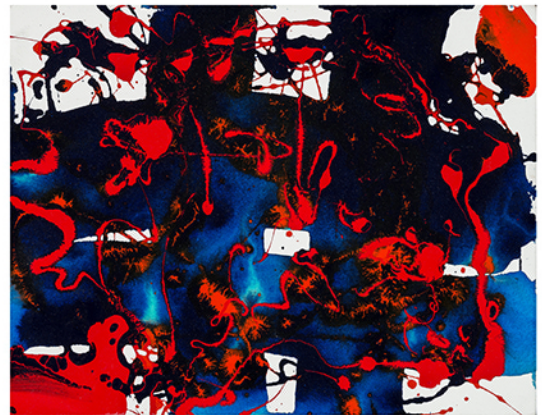
With *Between Tachisme and Abstract Expressionism: Bluhm, Francis, Jenkins*, Hollis Taggart Galleries will present a selection of works by Postwar painters Norman Bluhm, Sam Francis, and Paul Jenkins that illustrates their function as a bridge between the avant-garde movements in New York and Paris. All three artists spent most of the 1950s together in Paris, bringing with them the gesturalism of the New York School. Into this they incorporated the luminous light that is characteristic of French art, beginning with the early modernisms of the Impressionists and Symbolists and up to contemporary *tachistes*.

In the early 1950s, Francis, Bluhm, and Jenkins met almost daily with a small group of artists and thinkers that also included Joan Mitchell, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and Michel Duthuit. This group adapted the raw energies of Abstract Expressionism to the more refined Parisian aesthetic in often large, all-over canvases that showcase deftly layered color. While Francis and Bluhm approached their work with brush in hand, Jenkins developed a pouring technique that utilized gravity to produce vibrant washes of paint. All adopted the free-flowing abstraction characteristic of *tachisme*, which was developing in Paris at this same time.

Tachisme gets its name from *tache*, meaning a stain or splash. This French sister to American Abstract Expressionism first coalesced in the 1951 exhibition *Un Art Autre*, curated by French critic Michel Tapié. Francis' work was included in this exhibition and he would continue to be closely aligned with the movement. He and Bluhm shared a



Norman Bluhm (1921-1999)
Pequod, 1963, Oil on canvas, 65 3/4 x 90 1/2 inches



Sam Francis (1923-1994)
Untitled (SFP94-80), 1994, Acrylic on canvas, 14 x 18 inches

Paris studio during this period. Their tight relationship is evident in large, dense canvases of the early and mid-1950s that reveal a careful study of French modernism and its signature luminosity. Monet, in particular, held great appeal for these artists who in 1953 had the chance to view his late water lily paintings at the newly reopened Musée de l'Orangerie.

For each of the three artists highlighted in this exhibition, time in Paris provided a pivotal foundation for the rest of their careers. Francis' involvement with *tachisme* helped solidify a personal style built around expressive open space. Bluhm's dense yet luminous compositions come out of a deep knowledge of French art. And the pouring technique that Jenkins developed in Paris became the hallmark of his lengthy career. Though none of them stayed in Paris indefinitely, the time spent there together was indispensable to each.

Between Tachisme and Abstract Expressionism: Bluhm, Francis, Jenkins will be on view at the gallery's Chelsea location from October 5 to November 10, 2017. An illustrated brochure with an essay detailing the relationship between these three artists by Ashley Park will accompany the exhibition. Formerly of Hollis Taggart Galleries, Park's previous publications include *Alex Kanevsky: Thoughts on Some Paintings* and *Marla Friedman: Capturing the Spirit*.

CONTACT

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Paul Jenkins (1923-2012)
Phenomena Hokusai Fall, 1974, Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 inches