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WILLIAM TURNER GALLERY

ED MOSES
Through The Looking Glass
January 26–March 30, 2019



Opening Reception
Saturday, January 26, 2019, 6-8pm
William Turner Gallery, 2525 Michigan Ave E-1, Santa Monica, CA 90404

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*
- Dylan Thomas

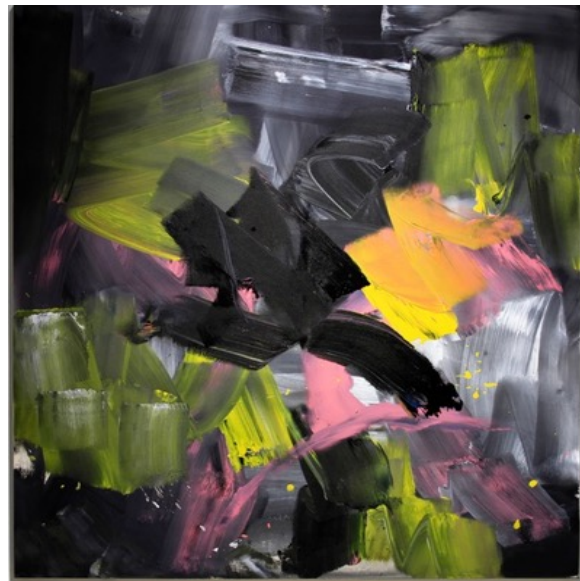
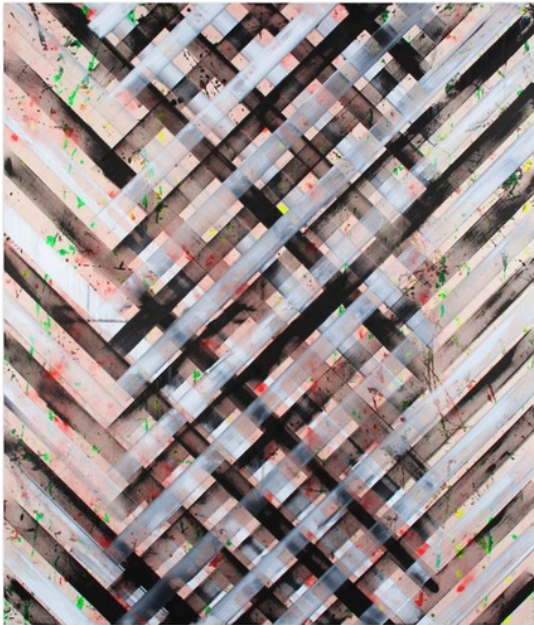
And rage against the dying of the light he did. Ed Moses charged into his late career with a vengeance, battling mightily against the tolls of time. This last hurrah became an incredibly productive and successful crescendo to a long, legendary career.

Through the Looking Glass presents an overview of this last period, with a selection of work Moses produced over the last five years of his life. The work is ambitious and adventurous, and is marked by the artist's spontaneity and expansive visual vocabulary.

The exhibition reveals an artist fully engaged, working in the moment, embracing a career's worth of stylistic approaches, while incorporating new ones, as Moses boldly entered the labyrinths of the creative process. The works are dramatic in scope and exemplify the breadth of his reach. The title of the exhibition is from Lewis Carroll, one of Moses's favorite writers, and refers to one of the artist's fundamental beliefs - that art, at its best, is a portal to the unknown, through which one is transported to magical realms.

Moses did not paint to express; he painted to discover. Restless curiosity was his driving force - chance and circumstance his guiding principles. Often Moses would see the ghost images that appeared on the backs of his paintings as the very point and pith of the effort - subconscious postern doors opening to new dimensions through a willingness to embrace the unexpected.

It has been a year since Ed Moses has passed to the other side of the looking glass. We are honored to present these late works by this incredibly gifted, committed, and important painter.



Moses obsessively mined the possibilities of abstract painting for over 60 years, leaving an indelible mark on the contemporary art world. He was extraordinarily productive, and as he entered his 90s, he showed little signs of slowing down, painting daily, as he had done for decades, outdoors at his Venice studio, and attending numerous exhibitions of his work at various venues throughout the city.

Moses received national and international recognition for his singular, categorically evasive practice. Known for his restless intensity and ever-evolving style, Moses was considered one of LA's most innovative painters, and a central figure in the city's art scene since first gracing the walls of its legendary Ferus Gallery in 1958. Moses often referred to himself as a "mutator," driven less by the desire for self-expression than by a voracious appetite for experimentation and discovery. Describing his approach, Moses said, "The rational mind constantly wants to be in charge. The other parts want to fly. My painting is the encounter between the mind's necessity for control and its yearning to fly, to be free from our ever-confining skull."

A 200-page, fully illustrated artist monograph is forthcoming in 2019, and will include critical essays about the artist's life and work by Richard Davey, Ph.D., author, and Chaplain at Nottingham Trent University, UK; and Thomas Krens, former Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York City, and current Senior Advisor for International Affairs.

ED MOSES

Ed Moses was born on April 9, 1926, in Long Beach, CA. and did not initially choose the artistic path. After serving as a surgical technician during World War II, Moses intended to become a doctor. He enrolled in Long Beach City College's pre-med program, but dropped out, citing his inability to memorize the curriculum. On a whim, he took a life-changing class with artist Pedro Miller, who recognized the spark of untapped talent. Moses changed course and enrolled in UCLA's MFA program. There he met artist Craig Kauffman who introduced him to the future Ferus Gallery owner Walter Hopps.

Moses had his first exhibition at Ferus Gallery in 1958 while still a graduate student at UCLA. It was at Ferus that Moses would become a member of the raucous group of artists known as the "Cool School"; a group that included Kauffman, Billy Al Bengston, Robert Irwin, Edward Kienholz, Ken Price, Ed Ruscha, Larry Bell, John Altoon and Wallace Berman - all of whom pushed the boundaries of Post War art and shaped the nascent LA art scene at a time when almost none existed. His decades-long friendships in the art world include Frank Gehry, Tony Berlant, Vija Celmins, Alexis Smith, Joe Goode, and James Hayward.

A Buddhist practitioner since 1978, Moses worked in the moment, embracing and responding to elements of chance and circumstance. Endlessly intrigued with the metaphysical power of painting, he created works that embraced temporality, process, and presence remarking that, "the point is not to be in control, but to be in tune."

"My thought is that the artist functions in a tribal context, that he is the shaman. When the urban life came in, tribes no longer existed ... but there was still a genetic core of shamans, broken loose and genetically floating around. And when they had this gene, they shook the rattles. The shamans were the interpreters of the unknown, they reacted to the unknown with symbols and objects and wall painting. And that's where it all came from. That's where I came from. But when you're a young man you don't know that."

Moses preferred the simple descriptive "painter" or "mark maker" to that of "artist." Likewise, he eschewed being called "creative," as he sought to make paintings that were evidence of the journey, rather than preconceived manifestations of a "creative" process. He noted that his life and art were about "exploring the phenomenal world" and never adhered to any singular art movement or style. Rather, he continued to experiment, embracing transformation and change.

His first museum shows were in 1976 - a show of drawings, works from 1958-1970s at the Wight Gallery at UCLA, and a show of new abstract and cubist red paintings at LACMA curated by Stephanie Barron, which marked a transitional moment in his career. While drawing was prominent in his work in the 1960s and early 70s, by the mid-70s, Moses turned primarily to painting.

He was the subject of a major retrospective at MOCA Los Angeles in 1996, and in 2014 he showed at University of California Irvine where he had taught in the seventies. On the occasion of his 2015 drawing show at LACMA of works from the 1960s and 70s, organized by Leslie Jones, director Michael Govan commented, "Ed Moses has been central to the history of art making in Los Angeles for more than half a century." That exhibition included more than 40 drawings promised to the museum by the artist.

Moses' work is included in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Hammer Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Images from top and L to R: Ed Moses, *Woosh #1*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 78" x 66." Ed Moses, *Many Feet*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, 86.5" x 73.5" Ed Moses, *Swiz*, 2016, acrylic on canvas 79" x 74", courtesy of the artist's estate and William Turner Gallery.