

bernard jacobson gallery

Marc Vaux

New Ovals

2nd– 31st May 2014

Bernard Jacobson Gallery is delighted to announce the opening of the exhibition 'New Ovals'; a collection of new works by the renowned British artist, Marc Vaux. Born in Swindon, Wiltshire in 1932, Vaux attended the Swindon School of Art, before completing his art studies at the Slade School of Art in 1960. He taught art for many years, becoming Head of Painting at Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design, London, before resigning from teaching in 1989 to concentrate on his own work.

As a student at London's Slade School of Art during the late 1950s, Vaux became increasingly interested in American painting; first fascinated by the Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning, later by the minimal abstract paintings of Ellsworth Kelly. In 1959 the Tate's exhibition of The New American Painting further influenced Vaux, leading him to produce large-scale works and adopt a reduced and monochromatic palette.

Vaux first came to prominence in 1960 when his work was included in the landmark exhibition Situation, held in London. Since then Vaux has developed his non-figurative painting style, exploring a range of different materials and media from drawing and painting to three-dimensional reliefs and sculpture. The current exhibition focuses on a group of large, oval paintings – a coherent and visually exciting body of work, which marks a further development of Vaux's previous projects.

1964 saw not only a juncture in Vaux's work, where he moved away from a cross structure seen in previous paintings, but also signalled a dramatic shift in his palette. In 1963, George Rowney started manufacturing acrylic paint, which Vaux considers one of the great artistic developments of the age. Vaux would load his car with the new paint, freely given, in exchange for providing feedback on the medium. This new quick drying paint allowed for further experiments with colour, such as letting the paint stain un-primed canvas, and flow in ways which would be impossible with oil paint. Acrylic is the medium Vaux has continued to use in his new work.

Vaux began to explore colour as a signifier of feeling. Colour was used freely without being attributed to any rationalizing order. Colour, and the effects of colour as light, have long been

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an important concern for the artist, as has the exploration of contrasts: hard and soft shapes, gesture and structure, closed and open spaces. Here, the soft, curved form of the oval is contrasted with sharp blocks of colour, angled to create white trapeziums within the centre. The white inner trapezoid form is raised, and bordered by colour, so that we differentiate between the coloured curved form of the outer oval with the white form in the centre. Vaux ensures form and colour work alongside each other to create a dynamic balance and geometric clarity.

The wall-mounted oval constructions are a continuation from Vaux's previous exhibition at Bernard Jacobson Gallery in 2010, 'Triptychs and Ovals'. These previous works were made from anodised aluminium sections and MDF boards which were painted with commercial cellulose spray paints, of a type commonly used in car manufacture until the 1990s, and meticulously buffed to a high-sheen finish. In Vaux's new body of work the dimensions of the trapezoid forms are decided through random computer-generated numbers. The works are also rotational; the ovals can be turned in order to relate more closely to their light and surroundings. Unlike the highly polished finish of Vaux's previous 'Triptychs and Ovals' the recent works appear painterly and seem to relate more naturally with their environment.

Marc Vaux has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad and his work is represented in many public collections including Tate, London; Arts Council of Great Britain; Victoria and Albert Museum; City Art Gallery, Leeds; York Art Gallery; and Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany.

Notes to Editors: The Bernard Jacobson Gallery was founded in 1969 and is a major dealer specializing in modern and contemporary British and international art. Situated in the central London district of Mayfair the gallery has two main exhibition spaces and a graphics department all within 6 Cork Street. In March 2011 Bernard Jacobson Gallery opened a new space in New York at 17 East 71st Street, NY 10021. The gallery also has a strong presence at major international art fairs, participating at Art Hong Kong, London's Pavilion of Art and Design, and the prestigious Art Basel.