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Press Release

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Mick Moon (1937 - 2024)

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mick Moon, who died in London aged 86 years, on the morning of Tuesday 13 February 2024.

“A truly radical artist whose achievements were obscured by his own modesty.” Alan Cristea

One of the key figures of post-war British art, Moon is considered one of the leading artists of his generation. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1937, Moon grew up in Blackpool, England. After completing his national service he studied at Chelsea School of Art, London from 1958 to 1962 and at The Royal College of Art, London from 1962 to 1963.

In 1963, the same year he began teaching at Chelsea, Moon made the first paintings to come to public attention, colour modulated strips made of acrylic on plastic. However, in the late 1960s his direction changed radically, and he became preoccupied with the late studio paintings of Georges Braque. Moon turned his attention to his immediate surroundings, the walls, floor and furniture of his studio. He made impressions of these surfaces which were then cut and collaged into large wall hangings.

In 1968 Moon moved into a top-floor studio of a large house in Addison Gardens, west London, the former home and studio of his friend Howard Hodgkin. Working in the studio downstairs was Patrick Caulfield, who was also taught alongside Moon at Chelsea. It was at Chelsea that Moon formed what was to become two lifelong friendships with Caulfield and John Hoyland.

In 1968 Moon arranged a studio exhibition of his recent ‘floor paintings’, which was visited by collectors and artists including Bridget Riley. The exhibition resulted in him being invited to join Waddington Galleries, London, where he had his first solo exhibition in 1969. These works carried Moon on a wave of success from an exhibition at the Tate, London in 1976 through to the Arts Council Hayward Annual and first prize at The John Moores Liverpool exhibition in 1980.

In 1972 Moon took part in a three-man exhibition with Caulfield and Hodgkin at the Galerie Stadler in Paris simply titled *Caulfield, Hodgkin, Moon*. The exhibition was an influential driving force in the staging of large show of English paintings a year later at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, which featured Moon's work. In 1984 the artist went on to win the Gulbenkian Print Award and he was elected a Royal Academician in 1994. He taught at the Slade School of Fine Art, London from 1973 to 1990.

Throughout his life Moon continued to employ a wide variety of media and techniques in complex and intriguing layers, and over time his investigations shifted from the confines of the artist's studio to landscapes and urban places that had been neglected. This included the Blackpool seaside of his childhood and the Sussex coast where he spent his schooldays. In London he was also a frequent visitor to Brick Lane, an area of displaced communities and cultures that had arrived from India through immigration. These subjects would appear in Moon's paintings and prints most prominently in the use of spice pots, glassware, tea chests and decaying beach furniture.

Moon first travelled to India in 1980 returning to the country many times throughout his life. Although less active in his final years, Moon continued to draw on Indian influences, making new paintings depicting boats moored along the coast of Mumbai and Goa, that he chose to unveil each year at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition. The bright intense colour of his earlier work was replaced by serene contemplative seascapes in various shades of grey. Alan Cristea who first worked with the artist at Waddington Galleries, and then at his own eponymous gallery, published several print projects with Moon, and staged what was to be the artist's final solo exhibition in 2019.

In 2019 the Royal Academy of Arts published the first monograph on Moon, a definitive overview of this important artist, overlooked in his final decades, written by the late art historian, writer and curator Mel Gooding.

In addition to the Tate's holding of key early works by Moon, his paintings and prints are held in numerous public collections including Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; Australian National Gallery, Canberra and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in addition to private collections.

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