

Press Release

GILLIAN AYRES AT 80

New paintings and works on paper

3 February – 13 March 2010

Private view: 2 February, 6pm – 8pm

The Alan Cristea Gallery at
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Gillian Ayres RA OBE, one of Britain's most respected painters, will unveil new paintings in an exhibition that marks her 80th birthday at Alan Cristea Gallery from 3 February 2010.

Broadcaster Andrew Marr described Gillian Ayres as 'probably the finest abstract painter alive in Britain'. He continued: 'Ayres has always been obsessively concerned with painting — the unfolding of a self-contained logic, whirling chaos held just in check. In her acid/sweet collisions, the complexity and crampedness, and then the unscrambling, of the canvas, it's about energy, laid down in colour and transmitted in shockwaves to the viewer.'

Ayres is best known for her vibrant palette and the sheer physicality with which she applies paint to canvas. The works in this exhibition contain many familiar motifs but also represent a marked progression. Each work brims with her usual energy, however these new compositions are more distilled and exude the confidence of a painter at the height of her powers.



Ayres was initially influenced by American Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s, but sees her work as part of a European tradition. Gillian Ayres said: 'Titian, Rubens and Matisse are the greatest painters, unashamedly, of sheer beauty but they also used the medium to the fullest in every sense before or since..'

Ayres studied at Camberwell School of Art and had her first solo exhibition at Gallery One in 1956. She held a number of teaching posts through the 1960s and 1970s including Head of Painting at Winchester School of Art until 1981. She was awarded an OBE in 1986, was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 1989 and in 1991 became a Royal Academician. Her work has been shown in major national and international spaces during the course of the last six decades including exhibitions at Tate Britain, The Royal Academy and Southampton City Art Gallery and is the subject of a major monograph by Mel Gooding. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, with an introduction by writer Christina Patterson.

Notes to Editors

Alan Cristea Gallery is one of the leading dealers in paintings and works on paper by a number of international artists. The gallery has regular exhibitions by contemporary artists and is also the largest dealer and publisher of 20th century and contemporary prints in Europe.

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Alan Cristea Gallery open 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm Sat
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