

A Landmark Exhibition Returns for Its 3rd Iteration, Spread Across 5 Venues



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by JULIA FELSENTHAL



Shape of painting, summer hit 2017, 2018, by Jana Euler
Photo Credit: Courtesy the artist; Dépendance, Brussels; and Greene Naftali, New York

In the late 1990s, when art dealers Pat Hearn and Matthew Marks decided to collaborate on a group show called “Painting: Now and Forever,” Hearn suggested they append “Part I” to the title. “That way,” she told Marks, “if any artist that’s not in it complains, we’ll just say you’re going to be in ‘Part II.’ ”

“I thought, *Oh, she’s so funny and brilliant,*” Marks remembers a few weeks ahead of the 20th anniversary of that original exhibition, and the opening of its third rendition. “But then I thought: *What are the chances that she’ll be here for it?*” Hearn, along with Marks a pioneer of the Chelsea gallery scene and a cofounder of the Gramercy International Art Fair, was already dying of liver cancer during the planning of their joint show, which opened in the summer of 1998 and featured a roster of artists including Mary Heilmann, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Prince, and Kenneth Noland.

Dubbed “a bohemian Holly Golightly” by *The New York Times* in her obituary, Hearn passed away just a few years later at the age of 45. She never got to see “Part II,” which Marks arranged with their mutual friend, Carol Greene of the Greene Naftali gallery, in 2008. (As Hearn’s archives now reveal—along with those of her late husband, gallerist Colin de Land, they’re currently the subject of an exhibition at Bard’s Hessel Museum of Art—some painters who were left out did, in fact, complain, though that didn’t end up scoring them a spot in the next go-round.)

This summer, Greene and Marks have teamed up again for “Painting: Now and Forever, Part III,” which shows the work of 45 artists across the gallerists’ five combined New York spaces and opens on Thursday. The show harkens back to a less commercial, more collaborative moment in the art world. (“There was no money to be made,” Marks remembers. “You became friends.”) Now, though, the range of what two local art dealers are able to access is vastly more international. There are ink-on-canvas abstractions by the Japanese outsider artist Eiichi Shibata, remixed propaganda imagery by Chinese-born Gang Zhao, and exuberant, narrative canvases by late Indian painter Bhupen Khakhar. There are also just as many women as men: younger and midstream artists, like Janiva Ellis, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Nicole Eisenman, and older ones, like Lois Dodd, Howardena Pindell, and 97-year-old Los Angeleno surrealist Luchita Hurtado, who has spent much of her seven-decade career floating way under the mainstream radar.

“It’s what seems especially relevant at this moment,” Marks observes. “Which is another way of saying: It’s what interests *us*.”