

CHEIM & READ

Ron Gorchov

The Last Paintings 2017–2020

September 14 - December 18, 2021

Cheim & Read
547 West 25 Street
New York NY 10001

Cheim & Read is pleased to announce *Ron Gorchov: The Last Paintings, 2017-2020*, an exhibition of the works executed in the final four years of the artist's life. It will be accompanied by a catalogue including a new essay by Barry Schwabsky. This is the artist's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Ron Gorchov passed away last year in Brooklyn on August 18, 2020, at the age of ninety. These paintings are the ultimate expression of his extraordinarily single-minded painterly vision. In the late 1960s, the artist invented a curved,



RON GORCHOV. *Close Call*, 2020. Oil on linen. 29 x 23 1/2 x 7 in. / 73.66 x 59.7 x 17.8 cm. ©2021 Ron Gorchov / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photography: Alex Yudzon / Cheim & Read, New York.

saddle-like stretcher that creates a painting surface that is simultaneously convex and concave. The structure seems to “imbue the works with an altogether different energy, appearing as if to flex or spring away from the wall.”¹ While virtually all of the works contain the same basic elements, two abstract shapes that relate to one another within a colored field, “the distances the artist can travel within the self-imposed restrictions of his chosen format are wide and unpredictable.”²

This structural invention is an important addition to the shaped paintings developed by a generation of postmodern artists during the late 1960s and early 1970s such as Elizabeth Murray and Ellsworth Kelly, among others. Cheim & Read inaugurated its Upper East Side venue at East 67th Street with *Ron Gorchov: At the Cusp of the 80s, Paintings 1979–1983* in September 2018, which explored the artist's expressive, lyrical works; this exhibition by contrast returns our focus to the core of the artist's practice, which is more compositionally restrained. This exhibition is comprised of a group of intensely pigmented, vividly animated works that constitute Gorchov's final testament.

In his essay, “Lucky Painter,” Schwabsky reminds us that the shape of the painting's support is not the only thing that individuates Gorchov's art, and suggests that Gorchov's acceptance of the accident lends the painting a mind of its own. “These passages are highly variegated, and serve as a record of the paint's own adventures than the artist's will.”

In these dazzling works, we see the cumulative joy the act of painting brought Gorchov, and together, they demonstrate his lifelong dedication to his project. Looking at the canvases he completed in the last year of his life — *Mocking Bird*, *Sir James Jeans*, and *July 4* — one is reminded of Titian, whose color and brushwork attained new heights of freedom while he, like Gorchov, was in his eighties.

A memorial to celebrate the artist's life will be held later this year. Details to be announced.

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RON GORCHOV

Ron Gorchov, born 1930 in Chicago, studied painting at the Art Institute of Chicago before earning his B.F.A. at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in 1951. Gorchov's first solo exhibition was held in 1960 at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, and after a brief hiatus from the art world, he completed the first of his "saddle" paintings in 1967. The artist went on to pursue this signature curved painting structure in countless variations for the next fifty years. His work was selected for the 1975 and 1977 Whitney Biennials, and he went on to be included in multiple exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the New Museum.

Gorchov's work has recently been the subject of solo museum exhibitions at Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2014), the Centro Atlántico de Arte Modern, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2011), and MoMA PS1, New York (2006). Gorchov's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Cheim & Read, New York (2019, 2017, and 2012); Modern Art, London (2019); Maruani Mercier, Brussels (2019); Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin (2018); Vito Schnabel Gallery, St. Moritz (2016). His paintings are held by major museum collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

For further information, please contact Stephen Truax (stephen@cheimread.com).

NOTES

1. Press release: *Ron Gorchov*, Modern Art, London (4/5–5/11/2019).
2. Press release: *Ron Gorchov*, Cheim & Read, New York (2/16–3/25/2017).
3. Schwabsky, Barry. "Lucky Painter." *Ron Gorchov: The Last Paintings, 2017-2020*. Cheim & Read, New York. (9/14-12/18/2021).