

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Milton Resnick
Apparitions, Reapparitions

Dates: March 18 – April 25, 2018

Reception: Sunday, March 18, 6 – 8PM

Event: Sunday, April 8, 4PM, 88 Eldridge Street
Geoffrey Dorfman (artist and critic) and Jenny Jaskey (Artist's Institute director and curator) in conversation about the work of Milton Resnick

Resnick constantly refreshes the surface with moist paint, as he alternates the articulation of form with its disintegration, an activity that maintains a sensual contact with the painting until the picture can suggest itself. Marks and sometimes shapes are subsumed in pigment, but often reappear in altered states or locations. Applying paint and mixing color amount to the same thing.

— Geoffrey Dorfman, *Milton Resnick Paints a Picture* (video).

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening on Sunday, March 18th, of *Apparitions, Reapparitions*, a large-scale exhibition of paintings on paper by Milton Resnick. The show will be held at our 88 Eldridge Street location, directly across the street from the artist's last studio and residence, a converted synagogue that will open to the public as the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation in April with a survey of Resnick masterworks, *Milton Resnick: Paintings 1937–1987*.

Resnick was the youngest of the first generation Abstract Expressionists; he died in 2004. He is best known for the large, heavy 'walls' of paint he produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, that is after a fertile context for their reception had long vanished. These imposing, physical contractions of gestural abstraction into the stuff of paint itself are both tumultuous and restrained at the same time. They achieve a clear limit of Abstract Expressionism and are the outgrowth of a unique encounter between an acute emotional charge and a specific material substance, one with recognizable and age-old affective powers. In these works pigments are mixed with the other chemical components of oil paints to produce immediate, rhythmic results for the viewer's eyes to engage with. And in a sense, there is nothing more or less to it, and that is perhaps precisely what makes these paintings so impactful today. They appear like foreign objects affirming their almost uncomfortable, yet unquestionable presence and realm of sensation into our pulverized and starved digital reality.

In 1981, Resnick was able to purchase a three-roll mill and a pony mixer with which he started to manufacture his own oil colors. He thus finally liberated himself from having to pay retail cost for paints, and from then on controlled his means of production. He enlisted the help of young artists, and together as a cooperative they bought linseed oil in bulk as well as pigments from various wholesale suppliers such as large chemical companies. In hindsight, this production association seems to be in large part responsible for allowing Resnick to imagine and make these groundbreaking, majestic paintings from the period. As Geoffrey Dorfman notes, "access to unlimited resources would feed his attempt at becoming, metaphorically speaking, his own universe."¹

Towards the latter part of the 1980s, in his 3rd floor small studio room one peers directly into when coming out of the gallery's elevator, Resnick began making paintings on paper in which things such as single figures and objects started to emerge, not unlike mirages out of his restraining 'walls' of paint. Subsequently a second figure, then groups of people asserted themselves in gradually more colorful and exuberant pictures. Ultimately, in no less than seven thousand gouaches, acrylic paintings, and pastels he frenetically produced during the last two decades of his career, Resnick activated the other classical genres of still-life and landscape before returning to various categories of abstract painting during the last four years of his life.

¹ Geoffrey Dorfman, *Milton Resnick: Boards 1981 – 1984* (New York: Cheim & Read, 2018), p. 4.

This exhibition stages a selection and sequence of fifty-three works – among so many other possible alternatives and combinations – one which seeks to adequately manifest and deploy the extraordinary range of artistic abilities of one of the most voracious and ambitious talents working in New York, and in the Lower East Side in particular, during the last three decades of the twentieth century.

Milton Resnick was born in Bratslav, Ukraine, in 1917, and immigrated to the United States in 1922 as his family escaped the turmoil of the Russian Revolution and Civil War. He studied commercial art at Pratt Institute and transferred to the American Artists School to focus on painting. After a brief stint in the Works Progress Administration Art Project, he was drafted into the US Army, engaging in fierce combat in the European Theater of World War II. Following his discharge, he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris under the GI Bill. Considered the youngest member of the first-generation Abstract Expressionists, Resnick maintained friendships with Arshile Gorky and Willem de Kooning, and married the painter Pat Passlof (1928–2011) in 1961.

Resnick's work is represented in many American and international collections, including: the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the National Gallery, Ottawa, Canada; the Australian National Gallery, Canberra; the Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, among others.

The exhibition Milton Resnick: Boards 1981–1984 is currently on view at Cheim & Read in Chelsea through March 31st. A catalogue with an essay by Geoffrey Dorfman accompanies the show. Further, The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation at 87 Eldridge Street will open to the public in April with a survey of Resnick masterworks, Milton Resnick: Paintings 1937 – 1987. A monograph with an essay by Nathan Kernan will be published on the occasion of that exhibition as well.

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

Miguel Abreu Gallery

88 Eldridge Street (between Hester & Grand) / 36 Orchard Street (between Canal & Hester)

New York, NY 10002

Telephone 212.995.1774 • Fax 646.688.2302 • post@miguelabreugallery.com

Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 10:30AM to 6:30PM and by appointment

Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street