



acb Gallery, Budapest, VI. Király u. 76. / acb Attachment, Budapest, VI. Eötvös u. 2. / acb NA, Budapest, VI. Király u. 74.

## **BAK 80**

**acb Gallery, acb Attachment, acb NA**

18 november 2019 – 28 february 2019

vernissage: 18 november 2019, 6 pm -8 pm

Having turned 80 this year, Imre Bak is celebrated by acb with a triple exhibition. The space of acb Gallery presents the artist's latest works from 2019, while acb NA and acb Attachment feature selections from different stages of the artist's oeuvre in the period spanning from the 1960s through the 1990s, with a focus on pieces that have never been exhibited thus far, or have, but a long time ago. By revisiting some distinctive works from this artistic career of more than fifty years, spectators are offered an opportunity to examine the manifold yet consistent evolution of Bak's art, discover the ways he has addressed problems related to the genre of painting throughout his oeuvre, and marvel at the consistently exceptional quality of his past works as well as his latest pieces.

The paintings of the series presented at the gallery space continue the program the artist embarked on three years ago, based on compositions of dichromatic stripes and rectangular colour fields, focusing on creating spatial illusion by means of two-dimensional devices and unleashing the narrative potentials of geometric composition. The exhibition's programmatic piece is a monumental shaped painting that dominates the exhibition space occupying in its axis. The composition of *Graffiti* comprises rectangles and stripes of vibrant colours, its rectangular shape interrupted by further rectangular protrusions on each side. The gesture of breaking out of the traditional confines of panel painting integrates the surroundings of the work into the painting's space, extending the confines of the artwork onto the wall of the gallery. The complementary colour relations within the piece create an illusion of depth: some of the rectangles and dichromatic colour stripes in the composition seem closer and others farther. As a result of formal and perceptual devices, *Graffiti* achieves with utmost perfection the endeavour that has kept emerging from time to time in Imre Bak's art since the late 1960s, termed "three-dimensional painting" by the artist.

The material of the exhibition at acb NA starts with paintings from the end of the 1960s, representing the period in Imre Bak's career when armed with the lessons of American and Western European hard edge and minimalism and having developed his own local personal stylistic traits, he embarked on his own path. The selection encompasses the characteristic stages of Imre Bak's artistic praxis, giving insight into the conceptual period influencing his way of thinking to this day, and stages of the structuralist period following it. The third exhibition at acb Attachment features some iconic pieces representing the radical postmodern turn that transpired in Imre Bak's art in the early 1980s. Temporarily repressing the rigor of geometry, these boisterous compositions organise diverse arrangements of signs into image components to provisionally bring narrative content into the limelight. The painting dominating the exhibition space with its dimensions of 2x3 metres already

represents the artist's period conceived in the spirit of motivic simplification, larger colour surfaces and architectural inspiration in the nineties.

The triple exhibition, which counts as a grand show on acb's scale, is a gesture of homage to Imre Bak's internationally significant career of fifty years of abstract art thus far, which continues in the face of geopolitical determination as well as existential and other difficulties and inequalities on account of the prevailing social order, with unwavering coherence, power and freshness.

Acb is proud that in the course of its collaboration with the artist, we could play a role in facilitating the acquisition of Imre Bak's works by such public collections as Tate in London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as contributing to his solo shows in London in 2016 and 2019, in Leipzig in 2018, in Berlin in 2019, and in a number of group exhibitions in New York, London and Paris.