

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Ed Baynard

21 November 2019–18 January 2020

Private View

Wednesday 20 November, 6–8pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in Europe by American artist Ed Baynard (1940-2016). This follows a highly acclaimed solo exhibition at White Columns in New York earlier this year, co-curated by Matthew Higgs and Vince Aletti. The exhibition will focus on works made during the 1970s, bringing together floral still lifes and trompe l'oeil tableaux.

Largely unknown, Baynard was a graphic designer for The Beatles, a clothing designer for Jimi Hendrix and he featured in Jack Smith's incendiary film 'Flaming Creatures' (1963). Raised in Washington DC, Baynard lived in Paris and London during the 1960s. After moving back to the US, the artist rose to prominence during the 1970s and his first solo exhibition took place at New York's Willard Gallery in 1971 on the recommendation of Agnes Martin. Baynard went on to have exhibitions at galleries including Betty Parsons Gallery, New York (1973); Marian Goodman Gallery, New York (1977); John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco (1980); and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York (1980/81).

Seemingly in contrast to his flamboyant life, Baynard's practice shows aesthetic restraint. Rendered in a flat, graphic style that recalls Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, the paintings from the 1970s are both meditative and lyrical in their exploration of the still-life. Steeped in tradition yet wholeheartedly contemporary, Baynard's compositions comprise slender-necked flowers and miscellaneous ephemera set against pale, monochrome backgrounds.

'Bowl Painting I' (1976) features a collection of two-dimensional ceramics on three floating shelves. Bursts of colour are confined to the surfaces of precisely delineated pots, creating a subtle tension between chaos and order. This dichotomy is also manifested in the minimalist shapes of Baynard's painted vessels and the complexity of the often exotic flowers they contain. The earliest work in the show, 'Wall Number One' (1975), captures a corner of the artist's studio in hyper-realistic detail, complete with trompe l'oeil reproductions of Baynard's art historical influences. Such still lifes connect Baynard with the tradition of American Precisionist painters including Charles Demuth and Georgia O'Keefe, while the artist's life-long pursuit of Zen-like minimalism in his work sets him apart.

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Baynard's work is held in the permanent collections of public institutions including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and High Museum, Atlanta.

Stephen Friedman Gallery would like to thank The Estate of Ed Baynard, Matthew Higgs and White Columns, New York for their kind assistance in helping to realise the exhibition.

For more information, please contact info@stephenfriedman.com.

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