

BRUCE MCLEAN: A HOT SUNSET and SHADE
PAINTINGS

2nd December 2016 – 28 January 2017



Bruce McLean, *Shade Painting: RED*, 2016, oil and acrylic on canvas, 265 x 265 cm.

Bernard Jacobson Gallery is delighted to announce an exhibition of new work by acclaimed British action sculptor, painter and ceramicist, Bruce McLean. Featuring works produced over the past year, including 6 'Shade' Paintings; a series of vivid works which explore light and shadows, as well as a six meter long minimalist "Sunset" painting and a group of new mono-prints on wood.

Few artists are as versatile or bring to their works such a sense of questioning playfulness as McLean and the exhibition at Bernard Jacobson is a masterclass of painterly light, colour and irreverence by the artist who likes to make 'big art out of small details' *Louisa Buck, 2012.*

McLean has gained considerable international recognition for his work in many different media, which ranges from paintings and ceramics to innovative work with film and theatre. In 1972 at the age of 27, he was the youngest artist ever to be offered a retrospective at The Tate, to which he responded with *King for a Day* a one-day exhibition which consisted of a catalogue listing 1000 proposals for sculpture, he has gone on to have numerous one man exhibitions at major museums including The ICA, Whitechapel and MOMA Oxford. This year, Mclean was one of the central figures of **Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979**, which featured his seminal work **Pose Work for Plinths 3** (1971) among other works which saw Barnes pond become the centre of the conceptual art world.

bernard jacobson gallery

McLean was a student at St Martins in the 1960s, alongside Barry Flanagan and Gilbert and George under the formalist teachings of Anthony Caro and Phillip King; pioneers who had removed sculpture from its traditional plinth a decade before. McLean was to directly reject their approach however, in favour of an even more radical interpretation of what sculpture could be; making his own body the material of sculpture and cocking a snoot at his tutors by not only reinstating the plinth but also making it his 'stage.'

This was to begin a form of experimental action based work which McLean continues to evolve to this day, although he does not see himself as a performance artist but as 'a sculptor who makes live work' commenting, 'I was trying to develop the nature of what sculpture could be. I'd rather be thought of as a dancer than as a performance artist – and I'm a very good dancer'

This is an important distinction for McLean, defined with humour and daring to push the boundaries of sculpture and performance in a way that seems to come naturally to him.

'Pose Work for Plinths was just one of many pieces, but it seems to have become my hit record, and it was instrumental in helping me move on to other things. I got very interested in architecture and in how you behave in different spaces. It led to thinking about posing, and it's the reason I started Nice Style with students from Maidstone College of Art – we were a "pose band" who didn't play instruments, but just posed.'
Bruce McLean (Frieze Magazine 2014)

McLean uses humour to confront the pretensions of the art world at time when it is ever more necessary, as well as amply demonstrating a love and mastery of the medium of paint. The new works by McLean at Bernard Jacobson Gallery combine virtuoso technique and dramatic use of colour with a large dash of humour - as one might expect from the artist who proclaimed "I like the idea of Barnett Newman in collision with Liberace".

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Bernard Jacobson Gallery:

Bernard Jacobson Gallery was founded in 1969 as a publisher and dealer in prints. Over the last 45 years the gallery has exhibited many great British, American and European artists including: Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Peter Lanyon, Robert Motherwell, Bruce McLean, Ben Nicholson, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, James Rosenquist, William Scott, Frank Stella, Pierre Soulages, William Tillyer, and Marc Vaux.