

Berenice Sydney

DANCING WITH COLOUR

Saturday 23 June – Sunday 8 July 2018

Private view: Monday, 2 July 2018, 6 – 8pm

SALON, in collaboration with Mallett and Dreweatts 1759, is delighted to announce *Dancing with Colour*, a selling exhibition of paintings by the British artist Berenice Sydney (1944 – 1983).

This show, remarkably the first presentation of her work staged at a major public art gallery in over thirty years, is comprised of a selection of oil paintings and works on paper that reflect Berenice's – as she was professionally known – signature lyrical and highly animated graphic style. Her paintings, notable for their fluency of form and movement, are inscribed with her passion for music and dance – she studied classical ballet, guitar and flamenco – as well as the sense of liberation and freedom of expression which prevailed in Britain during the 1960s.

Paintings such as *Untitled* (1966), and *Lady Enjoying the Sun (On the Beach)* (1966) (illustrated right), both of which are featured in *Dancing with Colour*, are typical of her work, in that they reflect the influence of cubist and fauvist vocabularies that were central to Berenice's practice, in contrast to the then-prevailing Pop Art aesthetic.

Although she died shortly before her thirty-ninth birthday, her work was widely shown in Britain and abroad in her lifetime and is held in over 100 important private and public collections; these include the Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate and the Smithsonian, Washington D.C.

Of her first solo show at the Drian Galleries in London in 1968, the critic Marina Vaizey in *Arts Review* praised Berenice's drawings based on Greek myths as 'neo-classical in technique and vaguely reminiscent of the famous period of Picasso, arguing 'a tough self-training' and as being 'coherent and elegant exercises.'

One of the most expressive and original artists working in Britain in the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, Berenice's oeuvre spans paintings, drawings, prints, children's books, costume design and performance. She travelled widely throughout her life, including to Greece, the Aegean islands and Egypt; the history and mythology of which provided subject matter for many of her paintings.

She continued to explore themes in her work relating to Persian mythology, Christian symbolism and Greek mythological subjects as well as referencing Ancient Egyptian art, creating a hieroglyph of her professional name and working on papyrus.

As her style developed, Berenice abandoned figurative representation for total abstraction, in which geometric or freely composed forms created rhythmic and harmonious compositions. The multifaceted experiments of this nature have been described as depicting her own 'floating cosmos'. As is witnessed in another featured painting, *Untitled* (1983), (illustrated right) the vortex-like compositions of these later works generate a dynamic structural frame that expresses joy, exhilaration and the artist's extraordinary freedom of spirit.

Says Philippa Adams, Senior Director, Saatchi Gallery: 'SALON is delighted to be working with Mallett and Dreweatts 1759 to bring this fascinating artist to wider public attention. Berenice Sydney was a brilliant colourist who uniquely combined British and European sensibilities in her work, with an enduring appetite for experimentation that was, tragically, cut short.'

Says Jennie Fisher, Head of Pictures, Dreweatts 1759: 'Mallett in association with Dreweatts 1759 is very excited to present this exhibition of works by Berenice Sydney. SALON at the



Berenice Sydney, *Untitled*, 1966, oil on canvas.



Berenice Sydney, *Lady Enjoying the Sun (On the Beach)*, 1966, oil on canvas



Berenice Sydney, *Untitled*, 1983, oil on canvas

Saatchi Gallery provides an intimate venue and the unique opportunity to review and re-position her work within the wider spectrum of 20th century British art. Her vibrant paintings and works on paper reflect influences as diverse as Greek mythology and flamenco dancing, all executed with a flamboyant lyrical style.

Proceeds from the exhibition will be donated to the Royal Academy Schools. Says the spokesperson: 'We are delighted that proceeds from the Berenice Sydney exhibition will contribute towards an award to a student studying at the Royal Academy Schools. The award will be made at the annual Premiums Exhibition and will give vital support to the development of the recipients work in their final year of study.'

For more information, please contact Albany Arts Communications:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the Artist

Berenice Sydney (1944 – 1983) was born in Esher, Surrey in 1944 and educated from the age of six at the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London. From her early years, she studied ballet with Marie Rambert and classical guitar with Adele Kramer. As an adult, she trained at the Dance Centre in Covent Garden and attended flamenco dance studios in Hampstead and New York City.

In addition to reading the classics and studying mythology, she was fluent in five languages. She was enrolled at the Central School of Art and Design but left formal art education to set up a studio in Chelsea. She participated in over 40 exhibitions before her death of an asthma attack at the age of 38. A memorial exhibition of her work, Salute to Berenice, was held at the Royal Academy in 1984 followed by solo shows in Italy, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Switzerland and Britain.

About Dreweatts

Dreweatts 1759 is a leading UK regional auctioneer of Fine Art, Furniture and Works of Art, European and Asian Ceramics and Works of Art, Jewellery, Watches, Silver, Clocks, Wine, Live Steam and Model Engineering Works of Art. Dreweatts operates from and holds auctions at Donnington Priory, the beautiful picturesque country house located close to Newbury in the Berkshire countryside, which is less than 1 hour from Heathrow airport and 1 hour from London by train.

Dreweatts offers a diverse and exciting calendar of specialist auctions along with single owner collection and house sales with pre-auction viewing at Donnington Priory in the days leading up to the auction itself. Dreweatts' London office is on Pall Mall, St James's, where weekly Valuation Days and exhibitions of auction highlights are held.

www.dreweatts.com

About SALON at Saatchi Gallery

SALON is a project space at Saatchi Gallery that has been created to present the work of leading international artists who have had limited exposure in the UK. Located in its own self-contained space at the Saatchi Gallery, this venture collaborates with galleries and artists' estates in selling exhibitions, and is directed by Philippa Adams, Senior Director, Saatchi Gallery.

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About Saatchi Gallery

Saatchi Gallery was founded in 1985 by Charles Saatchi with the aim of bringing contemporary art to as wide an audience as possible and make it accessible by providing an innovative platform for emerging artists to show their work. Over the last five years, the Saatchi Gallery has hosted 10 out of the top 15 most visited exhibitions in London, according to The Art Newspaper's survey of international museum attendance, and also has more followers on social media than any other museum in the world. Entry to all the Saatchi Gallery's exhibitions is free.

It was the first UK museum to introduce the public to exhibitions of Cy Twombly, Brice Marden, Robert Ryman, Sol LeWitt, Anselm Kiefer, Richard Serra, Jeff Koons, Philip Guston, Sigmar Polke, Bruce Nauman, Cindy Sherman, Damien Hirst, Jenny Saville, Sarah Lucas, Glenn Brown, Andreas Gursky, John Currin, Ron Mueck, Grayson Perry, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Cecily Brown, Martin Kippenberger, Peter Doig, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Richard Prince, Charles Ray, Duane Hanson, and Alex Katz, among others.

In recent years, it has presented surveys of emerging artists from China, India, the Middle East, Korea, Russia, South America, Africa, Germany, United States, and Britain, many of whom have achieved international success.

The Saatchi Gallery education programme attracts over 2,000 schools each year, organising student visits from primary school level upwards. The website displays over one thousand works that have been exhibited in the last three decades as a study resource, and also gives full details about the art to be seen in forthcoming exhibitions.

www.saatchigallery.com