

GAGOSIAN



HOWARD HODGKIN

Last Paintings

Opening reception: Thursday, May 31, 6–8pm

June 1–July 28, 2018

20 Grosvenor Hill, London

Howard Hodgkin, *Over to You*, 2015–17, oil on wood, 9 3/4 × 12 3/8 inches (24.8 × 31.4 cm)

For an artist, time can always be regained . . . because by an act of imagination you can always go back.

—Howard Hodgkin

Gagosian is honored to present *Last Paintings*, an exhibition of Howard Hodgkin's final works.

One of Britain's most celebrated contemporary painters, Hodgkin composed powerful, expressive works that, while nominally abstract, bring representation, gesture, and affect into urgent relation. *Last Paintings*, presented at the Grosvenor Hill gallery in accordance with the late artist's wishes, includes the final six paintings that he completed in India prior to his death, in March 2017, five of which will be exhibited for the first time. The exhibition includes more than twenty other paintings, never before exhibited in Europe.

In 1972 Hodgkin renounced working on canvas in favor of wooden panels and frames, some new and others sourced secondhand in India and Europe. The grain of the wood and the scars and scratches of the supports became integral to the paintings, affirming their physical presence and heft. *Last Paintings* attests to the immediacy of Hodgkin's methods, as well as his intuitive understanding of the relationship between hand, eye, and memory.

In Hodgkin's oeuvre, the legacy of British Romantics such as John Constable, J.M.W. Turner, and Samuel Palmer is palpable in his expressionistic colors, landscapes that bridge representation and abstraction, the sense of time's passage, and with it the inherent transit of patterns both meteorological and emotional. The earliest work in the exhibition, *And the Skies Are Not Cloudy All Day* (2007–08) is nearly three meters in width, and painted on unprimed plywood. The title invokes the connection between nature and the human temperament, allowing their respective fluctuations to unfold gradually as though over the course of an entire day. On closer inspection, the grain of the plywood beneath its green paint emerges as a faint rhythmic pulse.

Toward the end of his life, Hodgkin applied fewer layers of paint to his panels, leaving more of the support exposed, in visible dialogue with the paint. *Now* (2015–16) embodies an interchange between light and dark, time and feeling, where the natural streaks of the wood are left bare.

As Hodgkin's urge to substantiate what is essentially transient became ever more pressing, his art became less about retrospection or the remembrance of images past. His final large-scale painting, *Portrait of the Artist Listening to Music* (2011–16), previously seen only in his solo exhibition *Absent Friends* at the National Portrait Gallery (London, 2017), exemplifies his focus on the intangibility of thoughts, feelings, and fleeting private moments. The layered greens and yellows of *Don't Tell a Soul* (2016) seem to evoke an explicit recollection or excitation in rapid brushstrokes applied to the lower right corner of the support.

Hodgkin fully embraced the use of time as a compositional element. His paintings were often painted over months and years, the brushwork itself the final definitive step in long processes of reflection and deliberation. In images that deliquesce and resolve themselves before the viewer's eyes, Hodgkin makes material the irresolute dynamics of time and emotion, and the glancing, immaterial qualities of daily experience.

An illustrated catalogue, with an essay by Paul Hills, will accompany the exhibition.

Howard Hodgkin was born in London in 1932, and died there in 2017. Collections include Tate, London; Arts Council Collection, London; Government Picture Collection, London; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and National Gallery of Victoria, Australia. Institutional exhibitions include *Howard Hodgkin: Paintings 1975–1995*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1995); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2006, traveled to Tate Britain, London, and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid); *Paintings: 1992–2007*, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT (2007); *Time and Place, 2001–2010*, Modern Art Oxford, England (2010); *Made in Mumbai*, Curator's Gallery at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (2016); *Absent Friends*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2017); and *Painting India*, Hepworth Wakefield Gallery, England (2017).

Hodgkin was made CBE in 1977, knighted in 1992, and made a Companion of Honour in 2003. He was awarded the Turner Prize in London in 1985, the Shakespeare Prize in Hamburg in 1997, an honorary DLitt by the University of Oxford in 2000, and the first Swarovski Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon award in 2014.

Gagosian has represented Hodgkin since 1998 and has presented numerous exhibitions of his work in Europe, the United States, and Hong Kong. For further information please visit www.howard-hodgkin.com.

#HodgkinLastPaintings

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