

GAGOSIAN



HELEN MARDEN

Bitter Light a Year

April 6–May 8, 2021

976 Madison Avenue, New York

Helen Marden, *Evening Tide*, 2020, resin, powdered paint, and shells on linen, 50 × 50 inches (127 × 127 cm) © Helen Marden

March 25, 2021

Gagosian is pleased to present *Bitter Light a Year*, an exhibition of new paintings by Helen Marden.

Marden's compositions combine vivid color with gesture in a joyful affirmation of life's energies. Using resin to bind neon bright acrylics and raw powdered pigments with natural substances and found objects, she invests the aesthetics and techniques of expressive abstraction with renewed variety and purpose.

In *Noon Tide* (2020), Marden adds shells and fragments of glass to a biomorphic form rendered in acid pink, generating a dynamic fusion of the organic and the artificial. The appended elements follow looping skeins of paint traced on the surface of the canvas, suggesting a fluid, symbiotic relationship between the two distinct sets of materials. In *Forward* (2020), the same pink is joined by translucent fields of red, yellow, and blue, their overlapping shapes hinting at biological entities

while stopping just short of figurative representation. Clustered shells appear at once bound to the composition and independent of it; in *Evening Tide* (2020), two large scallop shell halves resemble wide-open eyes set in a howling visage of pink, blue, turquoise, and deep red.

The exhibition's poetic title, *Bitter Light a Year*, suggests hard-won wisdom and anticipates collective emergence from a profoundly challenging time for the planet. In works of endearing and unrestrained vitality, Marden offers an optimistic vision of a world in which environmental forces and human culture might be reconciled and reunited.

Helen Marden was born in 1941 in Pittsburgh and lives and works in New York and Marrakech, Morocco. Group exhibitions include *Who Chooses Who*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (1994); *Selections Summer '96*, Drawing Center, New York (1996); *Couples Discourse* (2006) and *Uncanny Congruences* (2013), Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park. She participated in the Whitney Biennial, New York (1995) and *The Last Brucennial*, Bruce High Quality Foundation, New York (2014).

#HelenMarden

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