

Karsten Schubert London

Press Release

Tess Jaray: New Paintings

17 February–25 March 2022

Room 2, Soho, London

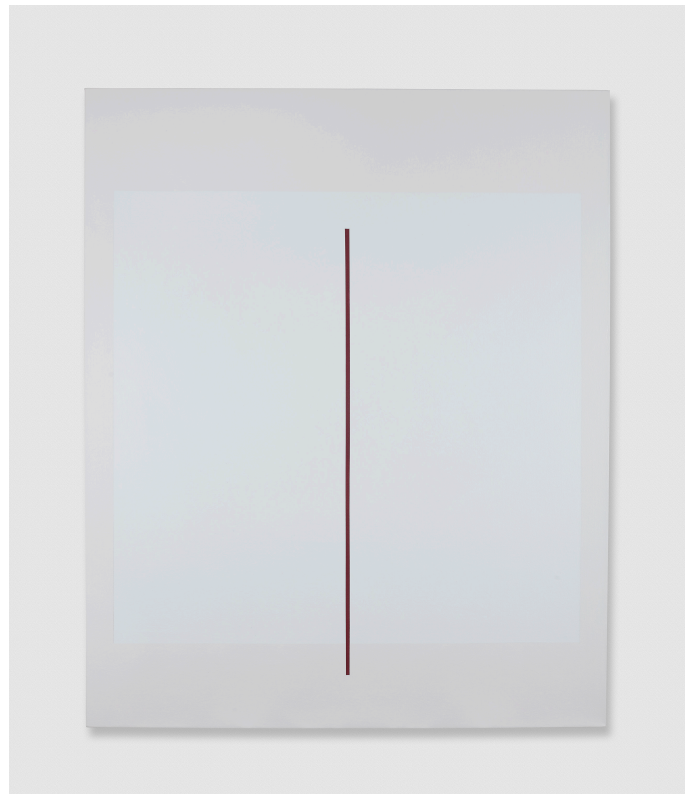
Open Tuesday–Friday, 11am–6pm; Saturday 11am–5pm

Karsten Schubert London presents *Tess Jaray: New Paintings*, a focused solo exhibition of paintings from the artist's *Solitude* series. Seen here together for the first time, they show the visual force of Jaray's intuitive handling of colour and form. These paintings are an exemplar of the abiding allure of Jaray's work: condensing a multitude of information and visual influences into utterly reduced and concise forms.

Refreshingly vibrant, *Solitude IV*, *Solitude V* and *Solitude VI* (all 2021), feature symmetrical planes of colour set around a prominent central line, creating a sense of optical flux in their respective colourways. These paintings, as is typical in Jaray's work, at first appear precise and controlled, yet on further viewing alter and shift, engaging the viewer and inviting their participation.

Recognised as one of British art's pioneers of abstract painting, Jaray developed a distinctive style early in her career that gained critical acclaim among the art world and her contemporaries. First inspired as a student during the 1950s by a trip to Italy, Renaissance painting and architecture remained an enduring influence leading to ambitious paintings and innovative commissions for public artworks of a monumental scale; notably the Victoria Station Concourse and Centenary Square in Birmingham. Although her practice stems from the austere tenets that define geometric minimalist painting, it possesses a playful quality that breaks from the cool objectivity commonly characterised by this genre.

It is through an innate understanding of how space is occupied in the physical world that Jaray is able to investigate notions of perspective, depth, and three-dimensionality on the canvas. Moreover, it is this ability to evoke a physical sense of space that belies the absolute flatness of the painting's surface that has contributed to the longevity of Jaray's celebrated career and afforded her a singular place among her peers.



Tess Jaray, *Solitude IV*, 2021

Opening in February 2022, this is the first solo presentation of Jaray's new work since *Return to Vienna: The Paintings of Tess Jaray* at Secession, Vienna in 2021, an exhibition which recognised her family origins, having fled Nazi-occupied Austria for London in 1938. *Tess Jaray: New Paintings* at Karsten Schubert London will be accompanied by a catalogue with essay by Wells Fray-Smith.

About Tess Jaray

Tess Jaray has explored the possibilities of creating space within abstract painting for more than six decades. She examines repetition, pattern and the relationship of size to scale within her surroundings, making paintings of spatial paradox in which the compositions seem to fluctuate between distance and closeness. Using line, colour and geometric forms, Jaray constructs a perception of evocative architectural spaces.

She first received critical acclaim in the early 1960s for her particular use of hard-edged painting. Critics noted how the colourful geometric constructions of the paintings were endowed with both a sober quality and expressive depth, evoking emotional responses. Jaray had created something with a controlled structure that also had an effect at a deeper level than the visual.

Tess Jaray was born in 1937 in Vienna, Austria, before coming to the United Kingdom in 1938 with her parents as part of the flight of Jewish refugees from the Nazis. The family settled in Worcestershire where Jaray grew up. She studied at Saint Martin's School of Art from 1954 to 1957 and at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London from 1957 to 1960. In 1964 Jaray started teaching at Hornsey College of Art, working there until 1968 when she took up a role as the first female art teacher at the Slade School of Art, where she taught for three decades until 1999 when she was made Reader Emeritus.

Over the course of her distinguished career, Tess Jaray has developed a practice that despite sharing affiliations with minimalism, architectural drawing, Op Art and other movements, resists any singular classification. She has created her own pared-down visual language that focuses on the possibilities of space and how to express this through the reduction and control of form. Today Jaray continues to innovate and expand her practice from her studio in north London. She recently began to employ new geometric forms in her works.

About Karsten Schubert London

Karsten Schubert London is a contemporary art gallery in Soho, London, representing a list of prominent and emerging British artists: Rose English, Kirsten Glass, Tess Jaray, Sarah Kogan, Cathie Pilkington, Frances Richardson and Alison Wilding. Since its founding in 1986 the gallery has presented a continuous exhibition programme in London's Soho, today operating at 46 and 44 Lexington Street. The gallery works to nurture the careers of its artists through commercial exhibitions, fostering institutional shows and purchases, commissions and publications by its publishing arm, Ridinghouse.

Press Enquiries

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