

GAZELLI ART HOUSE



© Harold Cohen, *Summer Solstice*, 2010.



© Albert Irvin, *Upper Thames*, 2010.

EXPO CHICAGO 2022

Preview Date: Apr 7, 2022

Fair Dates: Apr 8 - 10, 2022

Location: Booth 137, Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois

In its inaugural participation at EXPO CHICAGO 2022, Gazelli Art House is delighted to present a selection of works by Harold Cohen and Albert Irvin in the debut conversation between two key artists on the British and American abstraction art scene.

Harold Cohen (1928-2016) is widely recognised as both an abstract painter and a pioneer of computer art through the work he produced with AARON - one of the first computer software programs developed by Cohen for generating works of art, a predecessor of contemporary AI technologies. Graduating from Slade School of Fine Art in London, Cohen had his first solo show at Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 1951 and later his work was shown in a ground-breaking exhibition at Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1965. He represented the UK at Documenta III and 33rd Venice Biennale alongside his brother, Bernard Cohen. Cohen moved to the United States as a visiting lecturer at the University of California, San Diego in 1968 when he discovered computer generated art, which completely transformed his practice. The creation of AARON was revolutionary for its time and altered the way people approach the art-making process. Early versions of AARON created abstract drawings and grew more complex overtime. Cohen's work has been exhibited internationally, including in major institutions such as Tate, SFMOMA, The Victoria & Albert Museum in London, and others.

Cohen explored the visual characteristics of his works to see machines as an extrinsic force. Part of Cohen's experiments of geometric shapes and employing technology and mechanical view to abstract art remains

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consistent. In his late works presented at the booth, such as *Mid-Morning* (2010), *Orcas Fragment* (2010), *Summer Solstice* (2010), and *Taking Place* (2011), the artist used code which emulated the structure of leaves and trees, while each element would be grown from scratch.

Albert Irvin OBE RA (1922 - 2015), was among the most celebrated English Abstract Expressionist painters. Irvin expressed his interests in journeys, maps, cities, and the spatial environment; he had his own technique with sweeping strokes, often using a standing aerial painting technique. Irvin's ecstatic and colourful abstract paintings bring the viewer to realise different approaches to abstract art. Responding to the great legacy of Abstract Expressionist painting, first seen in England in exhibitions held at the Tate Gallery in 1956 and 1959, he engaged directly with issues of scale, expressive brushwork, emotive colour and virtual space. His art consistently tested the boundaries of painting by addressing these essential pictorial elements, knowingly, and in a genuine spirit of enquiry.

In *Santa Monica II* (2000), the quatrefoil is paired with rectangular shapes reminiscent of a casement window which is a recurring symbol in his work. Irvin's paintings are built in multiple layers, variously enigmatic and luminous. In *Allegro II* (2010), while there are edges, lines and shapes in his pictures, they are formed by direct application of pure colour: colour is form, in other words. While colour is not representationally directed, his work has a distinct pictorial space. In *Upper Thames* (2010), the exhilaration of the physical manoeuvre lights up the paintings, evoking a joyous crossing through the city.

Gazelli Art House has a history of bringing British and American abstract artists to examine how these art movements have shifted and shaped art history both separately and together. Showing works of Cohen and Irvin, Gazelli Art House seeks to spark a conversation between two great 20th century British artists who had a significant impact on the history of art globally.

About Gazelli Art House

Founded in 2010 by Mila Askarova, Gazelli Art House, London, has been committed to bringing a fresh perspective to Mayfair through championing artists from all corners of the globe, focusing on those at the height of their practice, presenting and contextualising their work to new audiences. With sister gallery Baku, the gallery specialises in promoting art from Azerbaijan and its neighbours to further a greater understanding of the rich linguistic, religious and historical ties that connect this geography. Since 2015, the gallery has expanded to support artists working in digital art through its online platform GAZELL.iO. Most recently, in 2020, it established the GAZELL.iO Project Space and VR Library, the first permanent home dedicated to digital art in Mayfair.

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