

Press Release

Kimber Smith

25 November – 21 December, 2011

Stuart Shave/Modern Art is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by the American abstract painter Kimber Smith.

Kimber Smith's paintings have a casual disposition and sparse, playful air. Simple geometric and lyrical shapes such as diamonds, circles, spirals and lines are spelt out in economically applied blocks of brushed colour and playful, unguarded gestures.

This exhibition at Modern Art presents a suite of gouaches on paper dating from the mid 1960s through to the late 1970s.

Kimber Smith was born in Boston, USA, in 1922. He began his career as a painter in New York after the Second World War, studying at the Art Students League of New York in the late 1940s. Kimber Smith first exhibited in New York with Joan Mitchell at The New Gallery in 1951 and held his first solo show at the same gallery three years later. In 1954, Smith travelled to Paris where he lived and worked amongst an expatriate community of American painters who included Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis, and Shirley Jaffe - peers of the post-Abstract Expressionist, 'second-generation' New York School. Smith's painterly style and progressive approach to abstraction came to maturation during his decade spent living in Paris: a period in which he exhibited regularly in galleries in France, Switzerland and Germany. Kimber Smith was included in the 1958 survey exhibition of American abstraction *Die Neue Amerikanische Malerei* at Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland, organised by New York's Museum of Modern Art. Returning to the United States in the mid 1960s, Smith assumed a professorship at Dayton Art Institute, Ohio, before resettling in New York. Kimber Smith pursued his work continuously, although without significant support and recognition from the New York community. Smith became seriously ill in 1975 and gave up his New York City studio for East Hampton where, despite poor health, he continued to paint with rigour and enthusiasm until his death in 1981, aged 59. Posthumously, Smith's work has been included in institutional shows at the American Center, Paris (1985, 1988); The Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, USA (1985); and *Vitalita Nell'Arte*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, touring to Palazzo Grassi, Venice, Italy, and Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, Germany (1986). A solo retrospective exhibition of Kimber Smith's work was held at Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland (2004), touring to the Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop, Germany (2004-2005). The Estate of Kimber Smith is represented by James Graham & Sons, New York.