

4 Days

Klara Jakes

6. June - 12. July

Modernity is understood through terminologies of progress, breakage, Enlightenment, *Neuzeit*... Questions regarding the placement of modernity within European epochal succession remain sites of considerable intra- and interdisciplinary contestation. Sketching the contours, there are those who contend that modernity – be it in philosophy, history, politics, or the arts – is to be understood as one epochal delimitation among many, while others define it as a category of radical rupture that exceeds mere historical periodisation.¹

In discourse on painting, modernity's shift away from figuration and representation is prominently argued to be an enactment of enlightened self-critique—painting turning inward, distilling itself to its core elements, particularly flatness.² Rather than simply an “unraveling of anterior tradition”³ modernity here is also “its continuation.”⁴ When positing modernity as temporal rupture, on the other hand, it acts as the radically new that is grounded in a non-prefigurative stance—occupying an awkward and questionable, yet profoundly impactful, position within cross-disciplinary European epochal narrations and their attendant conceptions of time.⁵

4 Days is interested in modern temporality: in its classification, its flaws and potentials, its possible beginning, ending, and continuation. Klara Jakes approaches Abstract Expressionism—a relatively late and complex modern movement, concerned in part with artistic self-reflection and medium specificity⁶—through strategies of citation and deferral. Drawing on works by Joan Mitchell, Norman Lewis, Grace Hartigan, Mark Rothko, and late Per Kirkeby, Jakes both constrains a bygone painterly discourse and pursues a modern longing, torn between the duality of rupture and referentiality.

Jakes' work comprises geometrical, rather strict and flat compositions alongside more spatial, eclectic linear abstractions. Certain paintings detail slight figurative forms, potentially animals or forests, while others remain disfigured. Two paintings are conceived as a reflexive pair. Three indicate distinct positions. As suggested, subtly, by a shared horizon running through each painting, and indeed by its very title—*4 Days*—this body of work evokes landscapes at sunrise and sunset. *4 Days* anticipates both rupture and blur, approaching modernity neither as failure nor as success but as a set of contradictions allowing for deferral, statement, and reinstatement.

- Béla Andor Mohné

1 Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 1–3.

2 Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting” [1965], in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 7–8.

3 Ibid., 9.

4 Ibid.

5 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 238; Osborne, *Politics of Time*, 11.f

6 David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2015), 7–12.