

HALES GALLERY

Frank Bowling OBE RA

The Map Paintings 1967-1971

16 October – 23 November

Private View: Tuesday 15 October, 6-8:30 pm



Frank Bowling OBE RA, *Texas Louise*, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 282 x 665 cm

As part of an ongoing series of shows devoted to the career of influential veteran painter Frank Bowling (b. 1936 in British Guiana) Hales Gallery presents Frank Bowling OBE RA *The Map Paintings 1967-1971*, the artist's third solo show with the gallery.

In 1966, having been resident in London since 1953, Bowling moved to New York City where he stayed in the notorious Chelsea Hotel. By 1967 he had his own loft and studio on Broadway in SoHo and that same year (and later in 1973) Bowling was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship. Between 1968 and 1972, Bowling was also acting as a contributing editor of *Arts Magazine* and became really active in the civil rights struggle for black artists to gain greater visibility in American museums and galleries. It was during these years that Bowling embarked on making one of his most significant bodies of work, the Map Paintings, culminating in his historic solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1971.

Both Jasper Johns and Larry Rivers had used maps as signifiers in their paintings and it was Larry Rivers who helped Bowling use an epidiascope to make stencils of the maps. Bowling's use of the map, however, would come to take on a very different set of meanings, referencing his background in the Caribbean and that of the greater African identity. These vast paintings combine an emotive use of coloured stains with sprayed motifs, and pave the way for Bowling's formalist poured paintings made later that decade.

A painting from this series, *Polish Rebecca* (1971), exhibited by Hales Gallery in early 2013, has served to mark the rediscovery of interest in these historically important paintings. Coupled with the publication of Mel Gooding's 2011 monograph, Bowling's exhibition of 1970's poured paintings at Tate Britain (2012/13, curated by Courtney J. Martin) and the pioneering recent texts by Kobena Mercer, Kellie Jones and Dorothy C. Rowe in various publications, all have served to heighten interest in this period and these pioneering works.

Frank Bowling OBE RA (b. 1936, Bartica, British Guiana), is a British abstract painter whose works have been widely exhibited internationally. Exhibitions include solo shows at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1971); Serpentine Gallery (1986); *Bowling on through the century* 1996-97, UK travelling exhibition; *Frank Bowling: Bending to the Grid* (2003), Aljira, New Jersey; *Drop, Roll, Slide, Drip...Frank Bowling's Poured Paintings 1973-1978* (2012-2013), Tate Britain, London, and others. Bowling's works can be found in numerous prestigious public collections including Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Royal Academy of Arts, London; Tate Gallery, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and many important and influential private collections.

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