

## Monique Frydman

7 June – 12 August 2017

(Preview: Tuesday 6 June, 6–8 p.m.)



**Monique Frydman**, *L'Absinthe*, 1989. Pastel and pigments on cotton canvas, 190 x 570 cm (75 x 224½ in) overall, 190 x 190 cm (75 x 75 in) each of 3 panels. Collection of the artist. Photograph by Monique Frydman Studio.

**Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art** is delighted to present a solo exhibition of paintings by **Monique Frydman**. Shown for the first time in a public institution in the United Kingdom, this exhibition surveys over thirty years of the French artist's career.

Monique Frydman's abstract paintings are a vibrant embodiment of colour and light. Soft lines are produced through frottage, a technique for which the artist rubs pastel on to an unstretched canvas that has been placed over a tangle of cord or string, then often completes a work by adding pigment to the surface. The elegant arabesques of lines created by this process blend into the colour-saturated canvas. Only from the 1980s onwards did Frydman start to use intensely rich colours, especially deep dark reds and blues, in her work. By the latter part of that decade she was making works of dazzling luminosity, paintings that have a subtle relationship to the works of artists she admired, such as Claude Monet, Pierre Bonnard and Matisse.

In the opening gallery of the *Monique Frydman* exhibition is *L'Absinthe*, 1989, a monumental triptych painted predominantly in luminous hues of green and yellow juxtaposed with areas of white and pink. Its light-drenched green, the colour of absinthe – an alcoholic drink much favoured in the bohemian circles of Paris during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – calls to mind the *Water-Lilies* series of Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet. Another major work is her double-sided *Polyptyque Sassetta*, 2012–2013, which in 2014 was exhibited in the Louvre's Salon Carré. It was painted in homage to the work of the early Renaissance artist Stefano di Giovanni, generally known as Sassetta, who created the *Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece* (1437–1444), a masterwork composed of 60 panels, many of which have since been dispersed, lost or irreparably damaged. Although Frydman's panels are apparently without figuration, they somehow convey a compelling human presence.

Elements of structure are integral to Frydman's works and have a rapport with the entire surface of colour. Informed by the work of Pierre Bonnard, Frydman completed a series of paintings entitled *Des saisons avec Bonnard*, 2009–2010, abstract works with overlapping planes of colour that not only evoke the seasons but also the planes of colour evident in Bonnard's works. Although abstract rather than figurative, the presence of structure could be interpreted as traces of the past.

Curated by **Ziba Ardalan**, the *Monique Frydman* exhibition is accompanied by a full programme of educational events aimed at involving the public.

**Parasol unit appreciates the generous support of** Caroline Eliacheff, Christopher Holder, Mara Ucovich de Montagne, Jean-Pierre Mustier, Claude Rayna and Bogéna Galerie.

## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

### **Artist Biography**

**Monique Frydman** was born in Nages, France, in 1943. She attended the École des Beaux-Arts de Toulouse and moved to Paris in the early 1960s. Her works have been shown in several gallery and museum exhibitions, including Musée du Louvre, Paris; Bonnard Museum, Le Cannet; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Verrière Fondation Hermès, Brussels; Matisse Museum, Le Cateau-Cambresis and the Passage de Retz, Paris. Her works are held in major collections including among others: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondation Cartier, Paris; 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Centre National des Art Plastiques (CNAP), Paris-La Défense, France; Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne (MAC/VAL), France; Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, Paris, France; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen, France; Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, France; several Regional Contemporary Art Funds as well as numerous private and prestigious collections.

### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

Founded in 2004, Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is a registered educational charity and a not-for-profit institution that operates purely for the public benefit. Every year the foundation organises four challenging and thought-provoking exhibitions of works by international contemporary artists working in various media, and arranges other artistic projects. The foundation also engages with the public and its neighbouring community through a full programme of educational events. In its genuine mission to serve the public, the foundation does not bear the name of its founder, and its exhibitions do not derive from any particular private collection. Admission to all exhibitions at Parasol unit is free of charge. Thanks to its innovative model between private funding and public support, one of London's most vibrant contemporary art spaces has come to exist and thrive.

**Free Admission**  
**Parasol unit**  
**14 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW**

**Opening hours**  
Monday, by prior arrangement  
Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Sunday, 12 – 5 p.m.

**Directions:** Tube to Old Street or Angel  
Buses: 43, 205 or 214 via City Road

**For more information please contact:**  
**Kirsteen Cairns**  
T: +44 (0)20 7490 7373, ext. 23  
E: kirsteen@parasol-unit.org