

DAVID SIMPSON

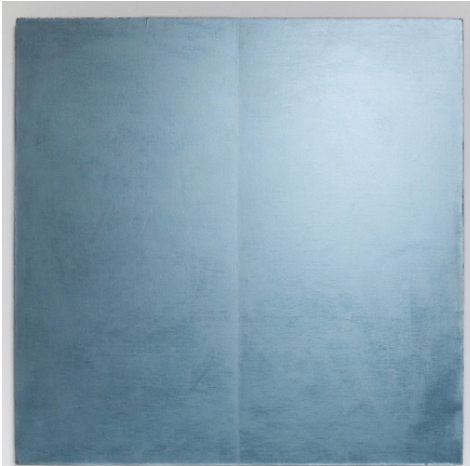
Smoke and Mirrors

Exhibition Dates: June 21 - August 23 , 2023

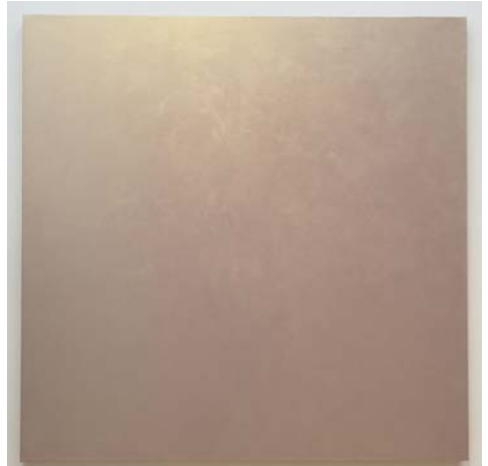
Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 21, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM



David Simpson, *Three Greens 1/3*, 1993
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



David Simpson, *Ice Age*, 1988
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



David Simpson, *Sovereign State*, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 66 x 66 inches

Haines Gallery proudly presents **David Simpson: *Smoke and Mirrors***, our 11th solo exhibition with the beloved Bay Area painter. At once reductive and radical, Simpson's paintings weave together impulses of minimalism with those of the California Light and Space movement, resulting in a singular creative vision.

Born in 1928, Simpson has been based in the Bay Area since the 1950s, graduating from the San Francisco Art Institute (then known as the California School of Fine Arts) in 1956. Since then, he has been a significant figure to the West Coast art scene, co-founding the artist-run Six Gallery—where Allen Ginsberg gave his first public reading of *Howl*—alongside contemporaries such as Jay DeFeo and Wally Hedrick, and teaching at UC Berkeley 25 for years. Now 95, he continues to create new work.

Smoke and Mirrors features a selection of paintings created between 1987 and 2019 using interference and metallic paints, two materials the artist has returned to time and again. The exhibition's name, shared with a 2013 painting included in the show, points to Simpson's evocative, irreverent titling, as well as the shifting, reflective qualities of the works on view.

The earliest works in the show, created in the late 1980s using metallic acrylic paint, are monochromatic canvases in shades of bronze, copper, and steely blue. Each is the result of Simpson's meticulous layering of up to 30 coats of paint, stopping in between each layer to sand the canvas down to a velvety finish. The rich, complex surfaces of paintings like *Bronze Tondo* (1990), so named for its circular shape, appear burnished and patinaed, playing on its metallic qualities.

In the early 1990s, Simpson began working with interference paints, which contain micro-particles that interact with and refract light. "The pigments had been on the market for only about a year before I discovered them," Simpson explains. "You

learn something new about them all the time. It took me nearly six months to learn how to use them, how to mix them, and to bring the color out. I've continued to learn about them as I've worked with them over the years. It's such a wild and wonderful paint."

These celebrated works appear to shimmer and alter in hue as they respond to changes in light, environment, the position of the viewer, and even the works around them. In *Interference Triple* (1991), a creamy, pearlescent surface gives way to iridescent flashes of pinks, blues, and yellows. *Smoke and Mirrors* includes several of these early, breakthrough interference paintings from the artist's archives, some of which are only now being exhibited for the first time, shown alongside works created just four years ago.

Throughout the exhibition, Simpson's compositions explore the optical and psychological effects of reductive painting. At the same time, his works always remain in dialogue with the environment, evoking the constantly shifting, atmospheric conditions of the San Francisco Bay, or the play of light on water. Presented in Haines' new, light-filled Fort Mason gallery location, each jewel-like canvas appears to radiate with luminosity, offering viewers a space for contemplation.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Simpson's (b. 1928, Pasadena, CA; lives and works Berkeley, CA) work has been included in exhibitions throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States. He is represented in important collections that include the Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; Berkeley Art Museum, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; The Panza Collection, Lugano, Switzerland and Varese, Italy; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; and Seattle Museum of Art, WA.

PRESS INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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David Simpson, *Bronze Tondo*, 1990
Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72 inches