



Susan Inglett Gallery is pleased to present *John McLaughlin: Ascetic Approach*, curated by David Platzker. The exhibition will run from 21 March through 20 April 2019.

John McLaughlin has long been characterized as the preeminent classical West Coast, minimalist hard-edge painter. His heralded paintings, produced from the mid-1940s forward, would prefigure the cool, anodyne aesthetic assumed by younger Southern California light and space, finish fetish artists, including Larry Bell, Judy Chicago, Mary Course, Craig Kauffman, Robert Irwin, John McCracken, and James Turrell.

McLaughlin's artistic origins and intellectual curiosity, however, were grounded in a deep interest in Japan, where he lived from 1935 to 1938 before moving to Boston to open a gallery dedicated to Japanese prints and Asian decorative arts. His earliest paintings, starting in the 1930s, reflect paired down still lifes and biomorphic abstractions that contained muted colors which, in a short span of years, distilled into deeply-considered geometric abstractions that harmonized the interplay of color-block geometric forms with white grounded scale.

*John McLaughlin: Ascetic Approach* takes root in a simple, forgotten, black, three-ring binder that contains over one hundred and twenty 8 x 10-inch black-and-white photographs of paintings by McLaughlin, clinically documenting in sequence works he produced from the 1940s until 1968. While not formally a catalogue raisonné of John McLaughlin's paintings, this binder is perhaps the most complete representation of his oeuvre produced contemporaneously with his production. Assumed to have been compiled by his long-time dealer, Felix Landau, the album bares evidence of McLaughlin's transition from abstract classicism to an art he referenced as possessing his "ascetic approach." As the artist wrote in March 1970, this phrase denotes the "position accommodated by my conviction that the viewer becomes central to the neutrality of the non-expressive structure. Thus, the absence of perceptible entity becomes the function of the viewer as opposed to the work itself. This is to say, his unmixed thought is content."

Paradoxically, these black-and-white photographs provide only the most basic reflection of McLaughlin's work. Devoid of true color and scale, they are ghostly renderings in gray to black monochrome of the artist's systematic trajectory. These reproductions will be punctuated by a select group of McLaughlin's paintings, yielding a vibrant intersection between the representation and the reality of his craft.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN was born in Sharon, Massachusetts in 1898. An entirely self-taught painter, McLaughlin's first solo exhibition took place at the Felix Landau Gallery, Los Angeles, in 1952 and was followed by an exhibition at the Pasadena Art Museum in 1956. Solo museum exhibitions include *John McLaughlin: Western Modernism, Eastern Thought*, Laguna Art Museum and *The Prints of John McLaughlin: Site of Contemplation*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He was recently the subject of a major retrospective at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *John McLaughlin Paintings: Total Abstraction*, November 13, 2016 – April 16, 2017. Select public collections include Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York among others. He died in 1976 in Dana Point, California, at the age of 77.

Susan Inglett Gallery wishes to thank Van Doren Waxter and Franklin Parrasch Gallery for their collaboration with Specific Object / David Platzker and the Gallery in realizing *John McLaughlin: Ascetic Approach*. The exhibition will be on view at the Gallery located at 522 West 24 Street Tuesday to Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM. For additional information please contact Susan Inglett Gallery at 212 647 9111 or [info@inglettgallery.com](mailto:info@inglettgallery.com).

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