

HUNTER ||| DUNBAR

Adrian Berg

Phantasmagoria

November 1, 2024 – February 15, 2025

Hunter Dunbar Projects is pleased to announce *Phantasmagoria*, a survey exhibition of work by Adrian Berg (1929-2011). Organized in conjunction with Frestonian Gallery and The Estate of Adrian Berg, the presentation will focus on paintings and works on paper from the 1970s to the mid-2000s. This will mark the first one-person exhibit of Berg's work in the United States since 1979 and his first ever in New York City. *Phantasmagoria* will be on view at Hunter Dunbar Projects' Chelsea location from November 1, 2024 through January 11, 2025. An opening reception will be held at the gallery on Friday, November 1st from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. A catalogue will also be published on the occasion of the exhibit with an essay by Barry Schwabsky and a foreword by Megan Kincaid.

Adrian Berg was born in London in 1929. He studied at the Royal College of Art from 1958 to 1961, alongside David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj. Berg had a close friendship and notable influence on Hockney, introducing him to the poetry of C.P. Cavafy and serving as a role model both socially and artistically. Berg exhibited with a number of London galleries, showing over the years with Arthur Tooth & Sons, Waddington Galleries and the Piccadilly Gallery. In 1986, Berg was the subject of a major retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery that subsequently toured the UK, with another retrospective taking place at the Barbican Centre in 1993. His work is held in many prominent collections, including the Tate, the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum.

For twenty years, Berg lived at Gloucester Gate on the northeastern corner of Regent's Park in London. During this time, Regent's Park was Berg's primary source of inspiration and his practice was defined by different renditions of the park from the 1960s through the late 1980s. Berg's works are marked by a reinterpretation of the British landscape tradition; rather than an academic approach, Berg created kaleidoscopic visions of nature with vibrant colors, dense patterns, and frequently, an unconventional use of perspective. Whether through a grid-like arrangement or a horizon line that wraps around the peripheries of the composition like the design of a Persian rug, Berg brings attention to the ephemeral qualities of nature through depictions of patterns and colors shifting in time.

Phantasmagoria showcases works from the last thirty years' of Berg's life, a period when he moved from London to Hove, in Sussex, and began to visit and paint a variety of English parks and gardens. In vistas of Kew Gardens, Syon, Wakehurst Place, Glyndebourne, and others, Berg often focuses on the reflection of plants and trees in water. In *The Lake, Kew Gardens, Winter* (1985), Berg presents a surreal scene of the icy lake where the repeated forms and patterns of ripples and snowflakes are seen from an aerial view while the trees at the top border are presented in simplified perspective. In this lush and multifaceted work, pattern and color become synonymous with the landscape itself. In later works such as the large-scale painting *Wakehurst Place, July* (2007), Berg uses thinned oil paint resembling watercolor, with drips of paint running vertically down the lower portion of the diptych. Like so many of Berg's paintings, *Wakehurst Place, July*, is an experiential reinterpretation of landscape that underscores the sumptuous and dreamlike glory of nature.

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