

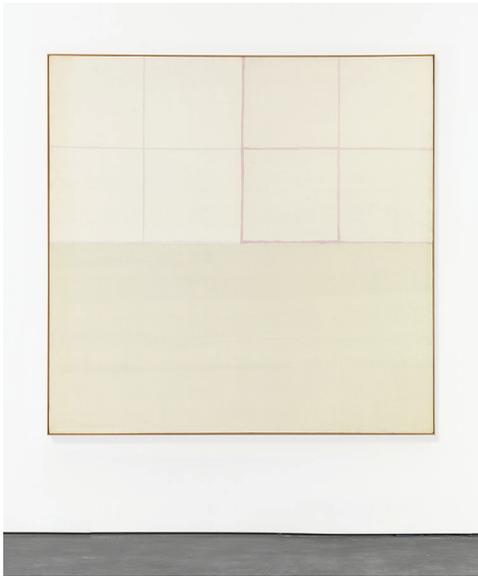
For immediate release

JAMES BISHOP

September 6 – October 25, 2014

Opening reception: Saturday, September 6, 6 – 8 PM

Guided tour and press preview with the artist: 10 AM



Having, 1970
Oil on canvas
77 x 77 inches (195.6 x 195.6 cm)
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David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by American artist James Bishop, on view at the gallery's 537 West 20th Street location. The exhibition will include works spanning the artist's prolific career and will present several large paintings on canvas from the 1960s to the early 1980s, as well as small-scale paintings on paper, to which Bishop turned exclusively in 1986 and continues to produce today. Providing a rare opportunity to view the artist's work, the show will be his first solo presentation in New York since 1987.

Throughout his career, Bishop has engaged European and American traditions of post-War abstraction while developing a subtle, poetic, and highly unique visual language of his own. Alternating between—and at times interweaving—painting and drawing, Bishop's works explore the ambiguities and paradoxes of material opacity and transparency, flatness and spatiality, as well

as linear tectonics and loosely composed forms. Privileging the nuanced and expressive qualities of color and scale, Bishop's luminous works have been described by American poet and art critic John Ashbery as "half architecture, half air."¹

In the early 1960s, Bishop developed the vocabulary of color and form that would characterize his paintings on canvas for over twenty years: a reduced but rich palette, the employment of subtle architectonic abstractions, and a consistently large, square format that reinforces the viewer's sense of scale and space. Included in the exhibition are *Having*, 1970; *State*, 1972; and *Maintenant*, 1981, which demonstrate Bishop's ability to render form, dimensionality, and light through the sensitive and seemingly effortless layering of paint. By overlapping thin but radiant veils of monochrome color, Bishop creates discrete geometric frameworks that suggest doors, windows, cubes, or, as the artist describes, an uncertain scaffolding. In works such as *Early*, 1967, and *Untitled (Bank)*, 1974, Bishop juxtaposes contrasting fields of white and color to produce simple but evocative abstract compositions.

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Related to but distinct from his works on canvas, Bishop's paintings on paper retain similarly monochrome palettes, while differing in their intimate scale and at times irregularly-shaped support. Devoting himself exclusively to this medium in 1986, Bishop was motivated by the idea that "writing with the hand rather than with the arm" might allow him "to make something... more personal, subjective, and possibly original."² In these delicately-rendered works, the traces of Bishop's hand preserve their charge of personal and emotional resonance, achieving a grand inner scale and restrained monumentality.

Born in 1927 in Neosho, Missouri, Bishop studied painting at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, and Black Mountain College, North Carolina, and art history at Columbia University, New York, before traveling to Europe in 1957 and settling in Blévy, France. His work has been the subject of major museum exhibitions: in 1993-94, *James Bishop, Paintings and Works on Paper* traveled from the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, to the Galerie nationale de Jeu de Paume, Paris, and the Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster; and in 2007-08, *James Bishop. Malerie auf Papier/Paintings on Paper* traveled from the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, Munich, to the Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop, Germany, and The Art Institute of Chicago.

Bishop's work can be found in important public and private collections throughout the United States and Europe, including The Art Institute of Chicago; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Grey Art Gallery & Study Center, New York University Art Collection, New York; Musée de Grenoble; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; ARCO Foundation, Madrid; Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, Munich; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tel Aviv Museum; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; and Kunsthaus Zürich, among others. This is his first exhibition at David Zwirner.

1 John Ashbery, "The American Painter James Bishop," in Dieter Schwarz and Alfred Pacquement, eds., *James Bishop: Paintings and Works on Paper* (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 1993), p. 109.

2 "Artists should never be seen nor heard," James Bishop in conversation with Dieter Schwarz, in *ibid.*, p. 36

For all press inquiries and to RSVP to the September 6 guided tour and press preview, contact

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