

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

PRESS RELEASE

Jordan Belson: Paintings 1950–1965

May 2 – June 29, 2019

Opening: Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Jordan Belson: Paintings 1950–1965**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. It features thirty works, the majority of which are being shown publicly for the first time.

Jordan Belson (1926–2011) is widely celebrated for his visionary abstract films. He studied painting as a young man and came to the attention of Hilla Rebay, the first director of the Guggenheim Museum, who exhibited his work at her Museum of Non-Objective Painting in the late 1940s. Around the same time, Belson began making short abstract films, and by the mid-1950s was hailed as one of America's most important experimental filmmakers. Over the next five decades his cinematic output would encompass more than thirty short films, as well as a series of groundbreaking light and sound performances.

Although Belson never exhibited his paintings again after 1950, the medium remained central to his art, and reflected and informed his films. His highly inventive approach to abstraction anticipated the work of better-known artists by more than a decade. Belson did not, in fact, consider his work abstract but rather a faithful record of altered psychic states. He explained, "I'm trying to focus on something, bring it back alive from the uncharted areas of the inner image, inner space." Through these interior voyages he hoped to discover the universal, and many of his paintings, with their highly centered primary forms, resemble sacred art. The earliest works in the exhibition are mandala-like compositions of interwoven rhythmic lines, while a series from the mid-1950s features circular shapes that recall tantric painting.

Despite Belson's mysticism, he was deeply committed to science. His technical control of color and light, the fundamental elements of his filmmaking, are on full display in his paintings. He also turned to geometry and physics for his subject matter, as in the painting *Porazzo Polyhedra* (c. 1965), which depicts a spherical shape made up of pentagons and octagons, like the geodesic domes of Buckminster Fuller, one of Belson's heroes. *Explosion* and *Spiral Hall* (both c. 1961) resemble diagrams of subatomic particles, while several paintings from the mid-1960s depict vividly colored nebulae, vast clouds of space dust and stars.

"Intuition is the basis of my aesthetic judgment," Belson said. "The more you allow intuition to speak to you, the closer you are to the truth, and the origins of the universe."

This exhibition has been organized in association with Raymond Foye and the Estate of Jordan Belson.

Jordan Belson: Paintings 1950–1965 is on view at 523 West 24th Street from May 2 to June 29, 2019, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com.