

# PAUL STOLPER

PETER BLAKE

Reintroducing the Clown into Art

Private View: 3 October 6pm – 8pm

Exhibition: 4 October – 9 November 2019

Paul Stolper is pleased to present Peter Blake's 'Reintroducing the Clown into Art', an exhibition of paintings and a set of three new etchings depicting clowns. The group of paintings, made between 2018 - 2019, fulfil a number of functions for Blake, and belong to what he calls his 'Late Period', a title he employs for all of his ongoing projects, instigated when he turned 75. Certainly not a retirement from work, Blake has never been busier with exhibitions, both here and abroad, but more a classification of this current period. It follows on from his conscious retirement at the age of 65 from the business of art when he finished his three year residency at The National Gallery, London.

The series of Clown paintings all follow the same composition, each one made up of a grid of 9 squares. The central square shows an inkjet of a clown, sourced from a Memphis printers, that makes posters for concerts and circuses. He is a classic type, with large ruff, round red nose, heavily made up and with a tiny hat perched on the side of the head. The bottom right-hand square is reserved for Blake's description and title, whereby 'Late Period Clown' is stencilled onto the canvas, above the hand-written signature and text 'Reintroducing the Clown into Art'. The remaining seven squares are reserved for colour, either the colours of the rainbow, or shades of black or shades of white. In his words, Blake says 'I was aiming for the purity of an Ellsworth Kelly with a clown in the middle'.

The clown as a motif is a favourite of Blake's, and one he feels has been neglected in art in recent times. As with other circus performers, including tattooed men and women, acrobats and harlequins, Blake has returned to them many times over the years in both print and painting. But it is the conjunction of the expressive and figurative clown face contrasted with the cool abstraction of the coloured squares that makes the paintings so arresting. They are reminiscent of his earlier black and white series of assemblages, where Blake collected, sometimes on a single 'walk' or over a restricted period of time, a myriad of objects, in wood, plastic, metal, all in a single colour, or as close as possible, and glued them to a painted wood surface. Both minimal and busy at the same time. Set apart from this group in the exhibition is a single striped painting, made up of six separate thin strips of canvas, each painted a different colour. The individual canvases were bought from the wife of the photographer Terence Donovan, who had bought a large number of canvases but had never used them. Blake kept them in his studio for years, not knowing what to do with them, until the striped idea suggested itself, almost a year before he began work on the colourfield clown paintings.

For further information, prices, and images, please contact [rachel@paulstolper.com](mailto:rachel@paulstolper.com)

Open

Mon – Fri 10am – 6pm

Sat 12pm– 6pm