

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

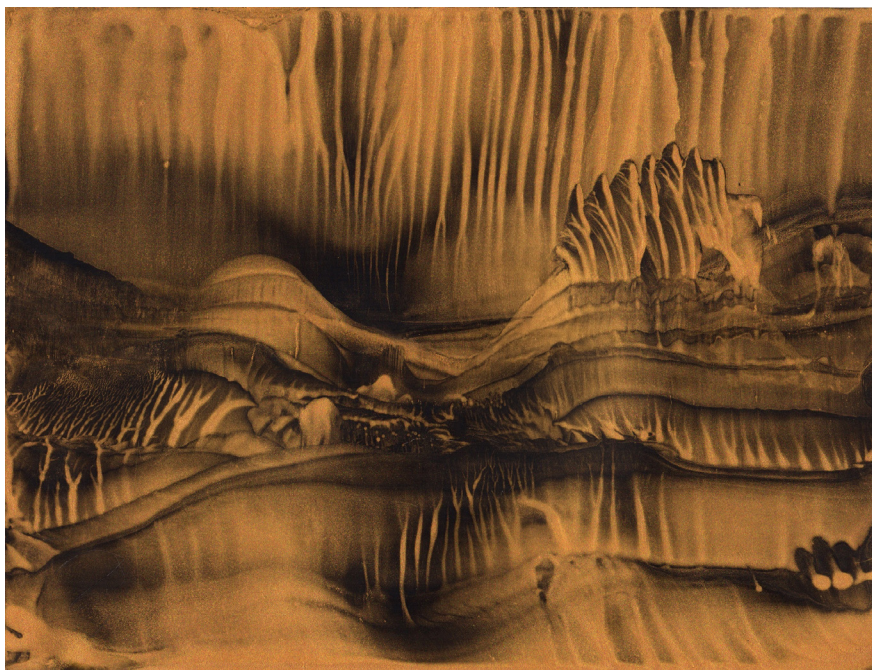
PARIS - BRUXELLES

Roland Flexner

Dessin

June 7 - July 2024

Espace II
3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, Paris 4^e



Sans Titre, (GL 27), Gold calligraphy ink and sumi ink on paper, 46,4 x 54 cm / 18 1/4 x 21 1/4 in. (framed)

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present in its Parisian space, *Dessin*, a solo exhibition dedicated to Roland Flexner, which also celebrates a more than twenty year collaboration with the artist. The exhibition consists of a group of twenty-one previously unseen works that take the visitor on a voyage through the realms of the artist's imagination.

Born in Nice, France, Roland Flexner lives and works in New York, where he has been based since 1982. For many years, the artist has been producing drawings that explore the interaction between chance and intention. This research began with his *Bubble Drawings* series in 1995, where the artist used a straw to project a mixture of Indian ink and soapy water onto sheets of paper. Following his residence at the Villa Kujoyama in the Kansai region of Japan, the artist continued his experiments using sumi ink diluted in water.

The artist's physical gestures are hugely important in these works. He manipulates the ink floating on the still fluid surface of the support, before blotting the paper in order to fix the imprint of the image. Once the paper is removed, the artist makes more adjustments. These techniques allow the artist to play on a variety of temporalities: the liquid captures the initial instant when the lines are created, which the artist then manipulates until the ink dries completely. The works are thus shaped into imaginary landscapes, traces and recordings of time itself.

This exhibition brings together two new series of images which, while distinct from the above-mentioned works, follow on from them in a form of continuity. They focus on "the intervention of chance in the emergence of forms, as it counters the routines acquired by the hand", the artist states. Flexner's intimate knowledge of the medium – in this case ink and liquid graphite – together with a range of gestures such as blowing and tilting (use of gravity), soaking and friction, which enable the artist to "push a picture to make a drawing that has pictorial qualities", as he says. Roland Flexner once told the critic and author Faye Hirsch that his project was twofold: on the one hand, pictorial research, concerned with the production of images, and on the other "a quasi-scientific¹ endeavour, documenting the flow of ink and the characteristics of the medium, which are transformed on the surface of the paper." The American art critic Roberta Smith went as far as describing this methodology as "cataloguing the possibilities of fluidity itself."

Although the twenty-one exhibited works can be seen as an ensemble – they are indeed two distinct series – each drawing possesses a resolutely autonomous character. The works are like "the geology of '*pierres de rêves*' (picture stones)", says the artist. The images that appear "are each a unique document of the flow of organic matter, in which chance, acting as both artist and creator, imitates the forms of art", he continues. The French author Roger Caillois coined the term "pierre à image" (image-bearing stone) speaking of a "logic of imagery" inscribed in them that explores the affinities between the complex forms of the mineral world and those created by the human imagination. Like these stones, Roland Flexner's drawings stimulate both the intellectual and sensory perception of the viewer: the eye detects images within the drawings, which seem to appear or disappear at the whim of one's imagination.

¹Barry Schwabsky from his article: "Roland Flexner, D'Amelio Gallery", *Artforum*, 2012.



Sans Titre, (LFG6), Liquide Graphite on Paper,
46,4 x 54 cm / 18 1/4 x 21 1/2 in. (framed)

Born in Nice in 1944, Roland Flexner has lived and worked in New York (USA) since 1982.

Born in Nice, France, Roland Flexner left France in 1982 to settle in New York, where he has lived for over forty years. His research focuses on the practice of drawing, in which he studies the interaction between chance and intention. He began this study in 1995 with the *Bubble Drawings* series, a group of drawings created with Indian ink and breath. Later, after a stay in Japan following an invitation from the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art, the artist turned his attention to Japanese art, studying the making of sumi ink in the Kansai region. The images produced are a permanent interweaving of chance, the properties of the medium used and the artist's intention to make precise gestures. These methods give rise to images close to a phantasmagorical universe, stimulating the viewer's intellectual and sensitive perception.

Roland Flexner has had numerous significant exhibitions since 1969. His work has been shown in major institutions in France, including: various FRACs (Auvergne 2023, Corse 2022, Picardie 2016...) at the MRAC in Sérignan (2020), the IAC in Villeurbanne (2016), the Maison Rouge in Paris (2014), the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou in Paris (2013), the CNAC - Villa Arson in Nice (2013), the CRAC in Sète (1999). His work is also shown extensively in the USA: NYU Grey Art Museum in New York and Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, MA (2024), Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester (2021), Albright-Knox Museum in Buffalo (2017), Indiana Museum of Art in Indianapolis (2012), Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2010), Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh (2009), Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield and Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art (1997), PS1 in New York (1982). Roland Flexner's work has also been shown for many years around the world: at the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2016), numerous times in Japan (2023, 2021, 2019, 2004...), Brazil (2023), Spain (2019), Hong Kong (2018), Lebanon (2017), Germany (2016), Russia (2012), Poland (2008)...

Roland Flexner's works have found their way into major public and private collections such as the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Fondation Guerlain (Paris), the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), the Museums of Sérignan, Strasbourg, Nice, Saint-Etienne... As well as the Fondation Pinault (Venice, Paris), the National Museum of Modern Art of Tokyo (Japan), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York).

Roland Flexner's collaboration with Galerie Nathalie Obadia dates back to 2001.

Paris Saint-Honoré

Carole Benzaken
Éclats
March 16 - May 18, 2024

Roger-Edgar Gillet
Une figuration Autre
May 27 - July 29, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Laura Henno
Grande Terre
April 6 - June 1, 2024

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri - Espace II

Roland Flexner
Dessin
June 7 - July 2024

Brussels

Romana Londi
What is your substance, whereof are you made (that millions of strange shadows on you tend)
April 13 - May 25, 2024

Wang Keping et le corps représenté
May 30 - July 13, 2024

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