

Alan Cristea Gallery

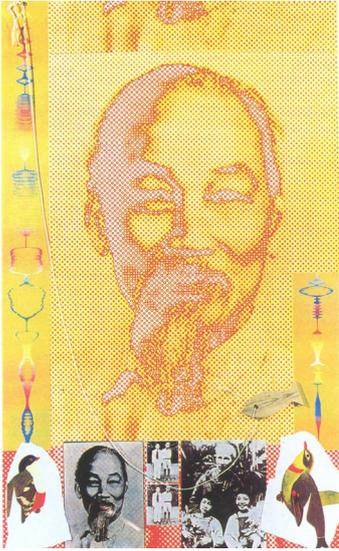
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Press Release July 2018

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Joe Tilson at 90

1 - 22 September 2018



Ho Chi Minh, 1970; Jan Palach, 1970; The Stones of Venice San Zan Degola, 2015 by Joe Tilson.

In celebration of Joe Tilson's 90th birthday the Alan Cristea Gallery, London, will stage a major exhibition, **Joe Tilson at 90** (1 - 22 September 2018), featuring classic and new prints by Tilson spanning almost half a century. Tilson, who was born in London in 1928, trained as a carpenter at the Brixton School of Building in his early teens, before completing military service. In 1949 he attended St. Martin's School of Art with Leon Kosoff and Frank Auerbach, and continued his training in 1952 at the Royal College of Art in with Peter Blake, Allen Jones, Patrick Caulfield and David Hockney, who alongside Tilson were instrumental in the birth of British Pop Art.

Alan Cristea, who has worked with Joe Tilson for almost fifty years, comments, "*In principle Tilson was the archetypal Pop artist - his work was 'of the moment', transient and overtly political. Indeed no artist's work was more political than his. And then he gave it all up, and it was no sacrifice at all. In 1970 he and his wife, Jos, moved to an old rectory in Wiltshire. Why? The answer lies in the work. Those so-called Pop Art works by Tilson lasted all of 5-6 years. Look further back to the wooden reliefs that he made in the late fifties and early sixties, to the images of ziggurats that immediately precede the political works. Wood is one of the oldest materials known to man.*"

Pop artists intentionally dealt with the transitory, the fashionable and the superficial. Tilson and his contemporaries enjoyed a love-hate relationship with a world in which the commodity became king. With the realisation that humanity and nature were the constant, and political engagement largely fruitless, Tilson turned instead to cultural history.

Joe Tilson at 90 at the Alan Cristea Gallery will feature Tilson's groundbreaking screenprints and collages from the sixties

together with his most recent prints. *Alcheringa* prints from the early 1970s exploring the four elements of earth, water, air and fire, will be exhibited alongside depictions of symbols and gods from Greek Mythology, including, *The Oracle of Zeus*, 1981; *The Shield of Achilles*, 1989-90 and *Nine Muses*, 2005. Works that reference ecological concerns through the representation of butterflies, birds and flowers made over a ten year period include *Conjunction*, *Swallowtail*, *Sasso*, 1996, and *Conjunction Kingfisher*, *Arpa*, 2001.

More recent works such as *The Stones of Venice* series, (2015 - 2018) represent the influence of Italy, a place Tilson has been deeply connected with since his first visit in 1949 to look at the mosaics in St Mark's, Venice and in Cefalu, Sciliy. New hand-coloured prints depict Venetian church façades paired with bold geometric patterns of the city's stone and tiled walls and floors. Tilson has drawn lifetime of inspiration from Italy and continues to divide his time between London, Tuscany and Venice.

Since 1970 Tilson has kept notebooks; a complete record of where and what was going on, people met, places seen, poetry, and illustrations of works in progress, all interspersed with personal thoughts. A selection of these will be on view in the exhibition.

"You draw, you paint, you make. It is a bit like religion, it's a bit like becoming a monk. You give your life to it. It is more than a profession. It is not something you get up to vaguely. It is something that possesses you day and night. Picasso made this famous remark: 'Art makes me do what it wants me to do'. I don't think, 'what am I doing next?' it just comes, it just springs out of thought and feeling. Your hand moves and then these things appear. And then you think 'Christ, did I do that!'"

Joe Tilson

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Editor's Notes

A lifelong dedicated and visionary printmaker, Tilson's work is held in collections across the world including Tate, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; The Stedelijk, Amsterdam; Kunsthalle, Basel; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Museum of Modern Art; New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Yale Centre for British Art, Connecticut.

Tilson lives and works in London and Venice.

Tilson celebrates his 90th birthday on 24 August 2018.

The Alan Cristea Gallery is the exclusive worldwide representative for Joe Tilson's original prints.

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About Alan Cristea Gallery

Prompted by a continuing ambition to 'paper the world in original art', Alan Cristea opened his eponymous gallery in 1995. The gallery is the primary representative for a number of renowned contemporary artists, artists' estates and emerging artists, and is one of the world's leading publishers of original contemporary prints and editions. Having expanded considerably over the past 21 years, in October 2016 the gallery moved to new, larger, bespoke premises, better suited to the representation of the gallery's growing roster of celebrated and international artists.

The Alan Cristea Gallery is entirely artist-led and is dedicated to assisting artists in bringing new bodies of work to fruition, including editions, works on paper, paintings, sculpture or installations, which are presented in a continuous programme of public exhibitions, events and art fairs. Alongside this, the gallery also draws on Alan's 50 years of experience in the art world to provide unrivalled access to the best examples of original prints by the modern masters of the 20th and 21st centuries, from Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso to Patrick Caulfield, David Hockney and Andy Warhol.

The gallery continues to extend the legacy of some of art history's most important figures through its work with the Estates of Josef and Anni Albers, Patrick Caulfield, Naum Gabo, Richard Hamilton, Howard Hodgkin and Tom Wesselmann.

Visitor information:

Mon - Fri 10am - 5.30pm
Sat 11am - 2pm
Closed on Sundays and public holidays

Open 1 - 10 August 2018 by appointment only
Closed 11 - 31 August 2018

Travel:
Piccadilly or Green Park tube station

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#JoeTilsonat90