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barbican

Lee Krasner: Living Colour

Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK

30 May – 1 September 2019

Media View: Wednesday 29 May 2019, 10am – 1pm

#LeeKrasner @barbicancentre

The exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Kasmin Gallery, a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant from the Art Fund and the Lee Krasner Exhibition Circle.



Photo: Irving Penn, 1972, Lee Krasner, © The Irving Penn Foundation; *Desert Moon*, 1955, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. © The Pollock-Krasner Foundation © 2018. Digital Image Museum Associates/ LACMA/Art Resource NY/ Scala, Florence.

'I like a canvas to breathe and be alive. Be alive is the point.' Lee Krasner

Barbican Art Gallery is pleased to announce the first retrospective in Europe for over 50 years of American artist **Lee Krasner** (1908 – 1984), opening in May 2019. One of the pioneers of Abstract Expressionism, Krasner made work reflecting the feeling of possibility and experiment in New York in the post-war period. ***Lee Krasner: Living Colour*** features nearly 100 works – many on show in the UK for the first time – from across her 50-year career, and tells the story of a formidable artist whose importance has often been eclipsed by her marriage to Jackson Pollock.

The exhibition celebrates Krasner's spirit for invention – including striking early self-portraits; a body of energetic charcoal life drawings; original photographs of her proposed department store window displays, designed during the war effort; and her acclaimed 'Little Image' paintings from the 1940s with their tightly controlled geometries. It also features collages comprised of torn-up earlier work and a selection of her most impressive large-scale abstract paintings. This work is accompanied by rare photography and film from the period, in an elegant exhibition design by **David Chipperfield Architects**.

Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican, said: *'We are thrilled to be staging Lee Krasner: Living Colour. Despite featuring in museum collections around the world and being one of the few women to have had a solo show at New York's Museum of Modern Art, in 1984, Krasner has not received the recognition that she deserves in Europe, making this an exciting opportunity for visitors here to experience the sheer impact of her work.'*

Samuel Sachs II, President of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, said:

'Lee Krasner would have been delighted to see her career being reconsidered in such a dynamic way at the Barbican. Her life and work are an inspiring example of what can be achieved with both vision and tenacity.'

Krasner was determined to find new ways to capture inner experience. As the playwright Edward Albee commented at her memorial at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in both her life and her work, *'...she looked you straight in the eye, and you dared not flinch'*. Born in Brooklyn in 1908 in a family recently emigrated from Russia, she chose to attend Washington Irving High School (which at the time was the only school in New York to offer an art course for girls) before going on to study at the National Academy of Design. She was inspired by the opening of MoMA in 1929; joined the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, where she made lifelong friends including renowned designer Ray Eames; was a member of the American Abstract Artists; and became a friend to many leading artists of the day including Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline.

In 1945, Krasner married Jackson Pollock and they moved to Springs, Long Island, borrowing \$2000 from collector and dealer Peggy Guggenheim to buy a run-down clapboard farmhouse. Krasner worked in the living room and then an upstairs bedroom – intimate make-shift studio spaces, which are mirrored in the Barbican Art Gallery's upstairs rooms – while Pollock worked in a converted barn outside. After Pollock's early death in a car crash in 1956, Krasner made the courageous decision to claim his studio as her own, which allowed her to work for the first time on large, un-stretched canvas tacked to the wall. The result would be the remarkable 'Umber' and 'Primary' series paintings, in which her exploration of scale, biomorphic form and colour collided into some of her most celebrated work. Examples on show include *The Guardian*, 1960; *Happy Lady*, 1963; *Icarus*, 1964; and *Siren*, 1966.

Lee Krasner: Living Colour draws from more than 50 international collections: from museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Washington, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, as well as from a large number of private collections. Many works are being exhibited in Europe for the first time, such as the monumental *Combat* (1965), which is over 4 metres long, and has travelled from the National Gallery of Victoria in Australia.

The exhibition is curated and organised by Barbican Centre, London, in collaboration with Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Information

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Full press pack available online from the Barbican Newsroom:

Links to all documents can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from www.barbican.org.uk/LeeKrasnernews

Public Information

#LeeKrasner @barbicancentre

Barbican Art Gallery and Gallery Shop, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS, London

0845 120 7550, www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Opening Hours:

Saturday to Wednesday, 10am – 6pm; Thursday & Friday, 10am – 9pm
Bank Holiday Mondays: 12noon – 6pm, Bank Holiday Fridays: 12noon – 9pm

Ticket Prices:

Under 14s: Free

Young Barbican: £5

Membership Plus Unlimited free entry + guest, **Membership** Unlimited free entry, **Corporate**

Membership Unlimited free entry + guest

Weekdays: Monday to Friday

Standard £15, **Senior** £13, **Unwaged/Student/14-17** £11, **Art Fund Members** £11 (no booking fee)

Weekends and Bank Holidays: Saturday & Sunday

Standard: £17, **Senior** £15, **Unwaged/Student/14-17** £12, **Art Fund Members** £12.50 (no booking fee)

Important Notes

Young children need to be supervised at all times

Large bags, rucksacks and luggage are not permitted in the gallery. All bags are subject to search.

Food and drink are not permitted. Photography is not permitted.

Exhibition

Lee Krasner: Living Colour is curated and organised by Barbican Centre, London in collaboration with **Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern** and **Guggenheim Museum Bilbao**. It opens at Barbican Art Gallery on 30 May until 1 September 2019. The exhibition then tours to three European venues: Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (11 October 2019 – 12 January 2020), Zentrum Paul Klee Bern (7 February – 10 May 2020) and the Guggenheim Bilbao (29 May – 6 September 2020). The exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Pollock-Krasner Foundation; Kasmin Gallery; a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant from the Art Fund; and the Lee Krasner Exhibition Circle. The exhibition at Barbican Art Gallery is designed by **David Chipperfield Architects** with graphic design by **A Practice for Everyday Life**.

Thames & Hudson book to accompany the exhibition

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication designed by **A Practice for Everyday Life** and co-published by **Thames & Hudson**, featuring essays from leading scholars including **Katy Siegel, Suzanne Hudson** and **John Yau**. The book also includes a previously unpublished interview between Lee Krasner and her biographer **Gail Levin** as well as a newly-commissioned chronology by **Jessica Freeman-Attwood**.

Price: £35 **ISBN:** 9780500094082.

Press Contact: Kate Burvill, KBPR, +44 207 226 7824, 07947 754 717 and kateburvill@gmail.com

Events

A rich programme of talks and events accompanies the exhibition. The website will be updated as events are confirmed: www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

Schools Offer

A downloadable teacher's resource, highlighting key themes and questions raised by the exhibition, is available to support school visits. A special school group rate alongside free exhibition tours, suitable for secondary school groups is £3 per student (secondary and sixth form, up to age 19) and applies to all school groups of 10 or more. Children under 14 are free. To ensure a free exhibition tour as part of the visit, bookings must be made at least two weeks in advance.

Please contact the school groups booking line: Tel: 020 7382 7211 (Mon–Fri 10am–5pm)

Email: groups@barbican.org.uk

Young Barbican

In addition to our regular discounted access for Young Barbican members, Barbican will host special views for Young Barbican members, offering young people the opportunity to visit the exhibition and see the works interpreted by their peers. The Young Barbican Guides programme invites young people aged 14–25 to respond creatively to our exhibitions and give creative tours to other young people and the wider public. Young Barbican membership is free and gives young people aged 14–25 discounted access to unmissable art and entertainment as well as exclusive events and creative opportunities. www.barbican.org.uk/join-support/young-barbican

Activity Sheet

A free illustrated children's activity sheet will be available for families visiting the gallery.

Barbican Art Gallery Shop

In addition to the official exhibition catalogue the Gallery Shop also features a wide selection of books and other related titles, prints, stationery, postcards, gifts and more. The best of the Barbican Shop ranges can be found online at www.barbican.org.uk/shop

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14-25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 are free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](http://www.barbican.org.uk) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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