



Exhibition Highlight: Michael Boyd Vibrant Abstractions at Eric Firestone Gallery

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by Pat Rogers

“Michael Boyd: That’s How the Light Gets In: 1970 - 1972” at Eric Firestone Gallery

Eric Firestone Gallery in East Hampton, N.Y. is vibrating with color. The entire gallery has been turned over to abstract minimalism paintings by Michael Boyd. Focusing on the years 1970 - 1972, the exhibition presents a front and center look into Boyd’s intense examination of paintings in vibrant colors that explored space and light through the use of hard edges and contrasting gradients.

The time period of the work is significant, explained gallerist Eric Firestone, for two reasons. During this time, Boyd’s compatriots were starting to move into conceptual art as abstraction became further deconstructed. Boyd tread his own path and focused on distilling his paintings down to their core structure to assert the primacy of paint (almost in spite of the vibrancy of his color palette). The time period also allows for the work to be paired in conversation with the California Light and Space movement.

A new catalogue has just been published on the work and features an essay by [Joe Fyfe](#), a painter and art critic.

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“Mosque” by Michael Boyd, 1972. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches. Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery.

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The exhibition in East Hampton is an abridged version of a show that was recently presented by Eric Firestone Gallery in his New York City Loft space. Click [here](#) for a review of the show for Hamptons Art Hub by art critic and author Charles A. Riley II. The NYC exhibition was the first time the series of paintings by Boyd was presented together since his solo show in 1973 at Max Hutchinson Gallery in New York City, according to Firestone Gallery.

Presenting the work in The Hamptons provides an additional opportunity (or a first one) to see the paintings. The show opened on June 21, 2017 and remains on view only until July 5, 2017. An advantage to seeing the work in person is the possibility of noticing and experiencing the way Boyd makes use of gradients as a painter. This is one aspect of his paintings that sets him apart from geometric painters that might spring to mind, according to Riley.

"This light-suffused gradation of color from more to less intense is what separates Boyd from Albers and many other geometric painters who keep color constant on the plane within the borders of form," [he wrote](#). "The ombre as a graphic technique is no longer such a big deal. Nowadays anyone with a Mac can manage the fading tone with a couple of keystrokes, but Boyd managed it degree-by-degree with painterly panache."



"Bustelo" by Michael Boyd, 1972. Acrylic on canvas, 78 x 78 inches.
Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery.

[Michael Boyd](#) (1936 – 2015) began his career as an Abstract Expressionist in New York City and slowly moved toward pristine hard edges in reaction to the New York School. While his peers eventually began exploring alternatives to the end of painting, Boyd threw himself into painting and adopted an obsessive painting practice. The works unite the reductive austerity and cool formalist attitude of the moment there were created in with a decidedly painterly approach.

Boyd taught design at Cornell University. He divided his time between Ithaca and New York City, where he maintained a studio in his Soho loft. Boyd's work is held by numerous public collections including those of The Albright Knox Gallery, The Everson Museum of Art and The Chrysler Museum of Art.

BASIC FACTS: "That's How the Light Gets In: 1970 – 1972," a solo exhibition of paintings by Michael Boyd, is exhibited at Eric Firestone Gallery in East Hampton from June 21 to July 5, 2017. The gallery is located at 4 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, N.Y. 11937. www.ericfirestonegallery.com.

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