

HEATHER JAMES FINE ART

Wojciech Fangor: The Early 1960s
Heather James Fine Art, San Francisco
October 11 – December 31, 2018



Wojciech Fangor, #29, 1963
Oil on canvas, 39 1/2 x 39 1/2 in.
Heather James Fine Art

SAN FRANCISCO – [Heather James Fine Art](#) is pleased to bring ***Wojciech Fangor: The Early 1960s*** to San Francisco from October 11 – December 31, 2018. This is the first U.S. travelling solo exhibition of one Poland's preeminent Post-War abstract artist in more than 25 years.

Fangor's (1922-2015) painting, [M63, 1969](#), is part of the San Francisco Modern Museum of Art's permanent collection. Recently his work has been experiencing a major resurgence of interest. **M77, 1968** sold for \$492,500, far exceeding its estimate of \$200,000-\$300,000, at [Bonham's' Post-War & Contemporary Art](#) sale last spring in New York. Additionally, Skira Editore released the [first international publication](#) dedicated to Fangor.

Challenging and re-inventing ideas about pictorial space, the nine large-scale paintings focus on the artist's breakthrough period, and relate to California Color Field Painting and Op Art. Each work on view reflects Fangor's distinctive use of saturated color and blurred silhouettes to create mesmerizing optical illusions. For example, **#29, 1963** represents a standout among Fangor's signature concentric circle paintings, which feature incandescent configurations of pulsating contours. Works such as ***Pink and Black Spindle, 1960***, and ***Red Moons 2, 1961***, feature bold abstract shapes accentuated by dispersed, edgeless transitions between colors, which create an illusion of movement. Taking a different turn, in ***Green Points, 1961***, and **#3, 1963**, Pointillism

magnifies the effect of the oscillating picture planes -- drawing the viewer's focus either to the transition of colors, or to the spaces between dots. The exhibition, is accompanied by an [illustrated catalogue](#) with an essay by guest curator, Polish art historian Patryk P. Tomaszewski.

Fangor first gained international exposure in the U.S., having his painting included in the 1961 exhibition, *15 Polish Painters*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and his first U.S. solo exhibition that same year at the Gres Gallery, Washington, D.C. A Ford Foundation fellowship brought him to the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), Washington, D.C. in 1962. The fellowship proved to be critically important by allowing him to solidify theoretical work he had begun in Europe concerning what he termed "Positive Illusory Space."

According to Fangor, "I discovered that my paintings with diffused edges of color and shape create a spatial illusion, which is not directed to the inside of the surface (like perspective) but extends in the opposite direction toward the outside of the surface into the real space between the painter and the viewer."

"As part of our mission to present solo exhibitions by visionary artists, this *show celebrates* Fangor's experimentation and avant-garde treatment of color and space in the abstract, which continues to inspire some of today's leading artists," said Heather James Fine Art co-owner James Carona.

Heather James Fine Art, San Francisco is located in the historic fine art building 49 Geary Street and is the fourth location spearheaded by co-owners James Carona and Heather Sacre. The gallery opened in 2018 and each season hosts rotating selections from preeminent artists including Claude Monet, Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall, Fernand Leger, Childe Hassam, Tom Wesselmann and Ai Weiwei, among others. Recent exhibitions include *The Paintings of Sir Winston Churchill* and *California: North and South*.

ABOUT WOJCIECH FANGOR

Wojciech Fangor (b. Warsaw 1922-2015) was one of Poland's most prominent artists of the 20th century. After the outbreak of World War II, he studied painting privately with Polish artists Tadeusz Pruszkowski and Felicjan Szczyński Kowarski. In 1946, he received a diploma in absentia from the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, where he later taught from 1953-1961. During the early part of his career, he painted in a figurative style that reflected his interest in Cubism, French Impressionism, and German Expressionism. His first solo exhibition was held at the Young Artists and Scientists Club, Warsaw, in 1949, and he gained wider recognition after he adopted Socialist Realism, creating paintings with a political message, notably *Figures*, 1950, and *Korean Mother*, 1951.

Turning away from Socialist Realism as the predominant form of approved art, Fangor began experimenting with abstraction, worked as a newspaper illustrator and a poster artist from 1953-1961, and became a founding member of the Polish School of Poster Art. At the time, he also collaborated on architectural projects that addressed issues of space, color, and public interaction. They included the Polish Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, and the interiors of the Warsaw Central Train Station.

Staged in collaboration with the architect Stanislaw Zamecznik and the designer Oskar Hansen, Fangor's *Study of Space*, 1958, at the New Culture Salon, Warsaw led to a more ambitious version of the installation shown the following year at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

From 1961-1966, Fangor lived in Vienna, then in Paris, then in Berlin (on a Ford Foundation grant), and subsequently taught at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham, U.K. Solo exhibitions during this time included the Lambert Gallery, Paris in 1963, and in Germany: the Morsbroich Castle Museum, Leverkusen in 1964, the Springer Gallery, Berlin in 1965, and the Kunstverein, Stuttgart in 1966.

In 1966, he emigrated to the United States, and soon began showing at the Galerie Chalette, New York. From 1966-83, Fangor taught at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey. He also lectured widely at art schools, colleges, and universities including serving as a guest lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, from 1967-68.

During the mid-1970s, when interest in Op Art was waning, he returned to figurative painting, and also produced a series of paintings based on television images. From the mid-1980s on, Fangor began creating paintings that included fragments of scenes, characters, and objects, which were often quotes from other images known from art history or repainted from illustrated magazines.

After living in the U.S. for over 30 years, in 1999 he returned to Poland, where he remained until his death in 2015. Solo exhibitions in Poland at the time included the Stefan Szydlowski Gallery, Warsaw, in 2000 and 2003; the Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, in 2003; and major retrospectives at the National Museum, Krakow, in 2012, and at the National Museum, Wroclaw, in 2015. In 2014, Fangor had his first comprehensive exhibition in the U.K., curated by de Pury de Pury at 3 Grafton Street, London.

ABOUT HEATHER JAMES FINE ART

Heather James Fine Art presents a rare look into art history's past and present, offering important works from a cross-section of periods, movements, and genres — including Impressionist, Modern, Post-War, Contemporary, American, Latin American, Old Masters, and antiquities.

In 22 years, Heather James Fine Art has expanded into a global network with galleries located in Palm Desert, California; San Francisco, California; Montecito, California (opening fall 2018); Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and New York, New York, with consultancies in Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois and Austin, Texas.

Each year, its galleries present an array of museum quality exhibitions exploring historical and contemporary themes, or examining the work of individual influential artists.

Heather James Fine Art is dedicated to bringing exceptional art to private clients and museums across the world, with the utmost personalized logistical, curatorial, and financial services.

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