

TEMPLON



PHILIP PEARLSTEIN

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Galerie Templon marks Philip Pearlstein's 95th birthday with exhibition



Philip Pearlstein, At 95. Exhibition View at Galerie Templon, 2019. Photo: © Diane Arques/ ADAGP Paris 2019.

PARIS.- 'I meant to create strong aggressive paintings that would compete with the best of abstraction.' So speaks one of the great masters of American figurative painting, Philip Pearlstein, who is choosing to celebrate his 95th birthday on 24 May 2019 in Paris.

To mark the occasion, [Galerie Templon](#) is taking a look back over the journey of a deeply original artist: despite studying alongside Andy Warhol in his youth, he took a totally different path, with a return to studio painting and the exclusive use of live nude models in complex yet incongruous compositions.

Over a dozen paintings, produced between 1969 and 2018, reveal a principled approach that has always been innovative despite the apparent simplicity of his subjects. As early as the 1960s, Philip Pearlstein defined a radical protocol that he still follows today, as part of his daily practice. He puts together strange scenes where his models, male or female, masked or undressed, pose for many hours over the course of many weeks. Compulsive bargain hunter and passionate collector, he immerses them in his skilfully crafted settings where he mixes mismatched furniture, patterned carpets, vintage toys, African sculptures, ethnic masks, gadgets, and more. He then meticulously paints his models with a neutral yet thorough touch, quashing any attempt to introduce a psychological aspect. The uncompromising and realistic result is free from any narrative interpretation and poses a disruptive question about the power of painting, perception, and the conventions of representation.

He has thus invented a depiction of the human body which has nothing of the academic about it and gives new meaning to the notion of the portrait. Like Lucian Freud and Alice Neel, he advocates a return to painting portraits and the naked form, although his work has the added element of a desire to rival New York's modernist abstraction, with which he was deeply connected, as well as minimal and conceptual art. His pioneering and unapologetic approach to the human figure has made him one of the precursors of the 'return to painting' that marked the 1980s in the United States, heralding the work of artists like Eric Fischl. In today's politically correct world, the radicality of his nudes and choice of straightforward settings are still remarkably relevant.

Galerie Templon has previously shown Philip Pearlstein's work in 1998, 2007 and 2011.