

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# GEOFFREY CLARKE

## *Extension*

10th September - 1st November 2025

PANGOLIN  
LONDON



The British sculptor, Geoffrey Clarke (1924 – 2014) is best known as one of the young British artists (together with Lynn Chadwick, Kenneth Armitage and Reg Butler) who took the 1952 Venice Biennale by storm with their angst-ridden monochromatic post-war sculptures characterised by the critic Herbert Read as 'The Geometry of Fear'. But there is much more to him than that. In *Extension*, a rare exhibition of Clarke's late career works, Pangolin London presents not only sculpture in silver and aluminium, but also little known surreal boxed assemblages of objects and, in a complete revelation, previously unseen paintings that pulsate with exuberant colour.

Geoffrey Clarke's distinctive language of sign and symbol is one of the most recognisable amongst sculptors working in Britain in the twentieth century. Son of an architect and grandson of a church furnisher, Clarke enjoyed a prolific career lasting over fifty years in which he operated across the fine and decorative arts making art and objects from different materials – from iron to aluminium, and stained glass to wood – on a variety of scales, and working on more public commissions than any other artist in the post-war period, including Henry Moore. With much of his commissioned work sited in church settings, Clarke earned a reputation as the leading ecclesiastical artist of his day.

PANGOLIN LONDON, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG  
T: 020 7520 1480 [www.pangolinlondon.com](http://www.pangolinlondon.com)



Although his early sculpture was monochromatic, he also had a long-term interest in colour, visible in the prints he showed in Venice in 1952. As Judith LeGrove writes in her illuminating essay which accompanies *Extension*, Clarke studied stained glass at the Royal College of Art in 1948 'in tandem with the colour theories of Goethe, Kandinsky and Klee. The psychological effects of colour would underpin his designs for the nave windows of Coventry Cathedral (1953–58) as well as many other stained-glass commissions fulfilled during this period.'

A radical extension to his practice came after his first visits to the Costa del Sol in the late 1960s, when he began painting having been introduced to locally sourced brightly coloured acrylic paint. Made in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the previously unseen paintings in this exhibition show Clarke embracing colour, assembling paint to create vibrant 'mises-en-scènes'. In his 'Extension' series of paintings, as LeGrove writes, 'he assembled figures distilled to a column and sphere. These figures engage in collective acts of searching or relate spatially to a divine presence descending from above. A belief in something beyond himself – rarely identified as specifically as 'God' – remained of fundamental importance to Clarke'.

Two paintings inspired by Henri 'Douanier' Rousseau's *The Sleeping Gypsy* 'scintillate with colour,' writes LeGrove. 'Trees rendered in blue and purple, lions abstracted with long manes and bushy tails.' In *Three Trees* (1989), 'the landscape brims with a rainbow harvest of windfalls,' she continues. In *A Table Still Life with Fruit* (c.1991), 'a jaunty cake-stand, a fruit bowl and a chequered blue poppy head appear to dance and jostle playfully.'

Clarke continued to experiment with materials at hand throughout his lifetime. After the paintings came *The Artist Series* (1999–2006), in which he explores the theme of creativity on a small scale, constructing boxed tableaux from wood and modelling clay some of which have a surreal feel like early Alberto Giacometti or Joseph Cornell. Pangolin London is delighted to present a number works from this series and LeGrove

considers each one in turn: *The Illusion* shows the precariousness of the creative act; *Respect* a maker's reverence for materials. Touchingly, there are moments of indecision. *Re-orchestration* suggests second thoughts, as does *I think I prefer it this way*. In *Before I forget*, the artist jots down an idea before leaving the studio'. Where there is a figure present, it is the pilgrim. Considering the artist-as-pilgrim was a constant for Clarke throughout his lifetime's work; one *Pilgrim* (2001) of which he was particularly proud, rendered in mixed media and standing at over 2m tall, will feature in *Extension*.

Clarke once said. 'To search is enough'. In an anecdote revealing Clarke's commitment to a life of art, ideas and innovation, LeGrove writes that, aged 85, Clarke was tempted to apply to the RA's 'Artists' Laboratory', an initiative to support the more experimental and less familiar work of contemporary artists. 'Advanced macular degeneration made it impractical. He nonetheless continued to envisage new projects and sculptures, rarely missing a day without drawing.'



As part of *Extension*, Pangolin London is delighted to present work made by the faculty at the Glasgow School of Art in response to Clarke's *Crown of Thorns*, situated in Linlithgow, Scotland. This project, titled *Re-Inspired*, illuminates the continuing influence of Geoffrey Clarke, and the relevance of his work and ideas within contemporary discourse.

A catalogue will be available on request.

For further enquiries contact: Rose Gleadell | [gallery@pangolinlondon.com](mailto:gallery@pangolinlondon.com)

Images: *A Glimpse of Rousseau*, 1990, Acrylic on canvas, 118 x 82.5 cm, Unique; *A Table Still Life with Fruit*, C. 1991, Acrylic on canvas, Unique; *The Illusion*, 1999, Mixed Media, 35.5 x 24 x 9 cm, Unique; *Pilgrim*, 2001, Mixed media, 222 x 91 x 38 cm, Unique.

PANGOLIN LONDON, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG  
T: 020 7520 1480 [www.pangolinlondon.com](http://www.pangolinlondon.com)