

SKARSTEDT

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DAVID SALLE: PAINTINGS 1985 - 1995

OPENING RECEPTION: APRIL 26 2018, 6-8PM
20 East 79th Street, New York



Skarstedt is pleased to present *David Salle: Paintings 1985 – 1995*, an exhibition of historic paintings highlighting a prolific and experimental period of Salle’s career. With a selection from some of his most significant bodies of work, the exhibition will be on view from April 26 – June 23, 2018 at Skarstedt Upper East Side, 20 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075.

A celebrated master of postmodern painting, David Salle is known for his deconstruction of images through his use of photography, collage, and his uncanny compositional instinct. With the return of painting in the 1980s simultaneous to the rise of the “Pictures Generation”, Salle became a bridge between these two techniques and ideologies, but also extending, in his own way, the contentious legacies of Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art.

Salle describes his early education in art as “taking place when the idea of a work having autonomy was still viable. The idea was to make something, which, instead of pointing to an experience, *is* the experience” (David Salle, “At the Edges. An Interview by Frederic Tuten,” Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1999, p. 16). One such work of art is Salle’s 1990 painting *Mingus in Mexico*. In reference to Charles Mingus, the American jazz musician who passed away in Mexico in 1979, the painting embodies an improvisation and intensity, which both ignites and neutralizes meaning. Salle’s empty pink speech bubble denies the viewer of any narrative explanation, however provides a conglomerate of visual cues, which create endless points of entry for understanding the rhythm, gesture, and depth within the painting.



SKARSTEDT

Salle's *Fooling With Your Hair* from 1985 creates a different conversation among seemingly disparate imagery. Split horizontally, the canvas shows two friezes, the top a colorful assembly of Giacometti sculptures and mid-century light fixtures, the lower is comprised of three black and white paintings of a woman based on Salle's own photographs. The model is seen lying on a table, in extreme perspective, in poses taken seconds apart, implying movement, a kind of performance. Her heavily shadowed body is both sexualized and not, objectified and distanced. Salle's use of provocative imagery overlapped with design and fine art sculptures by a modern master perhaps asks the viewer to question the connections that might lie amongst the two.

"I think the desire to paint comes out of looking at paintings and identifying with the actual material process. You have to feel that your 'self' is capable of being expressed through paint. You have to be able to sense painting as both a metaphor and as a specific physical reality, and feel that the two states are inseparable. Otherwise you shouldn't bother" (David Salle, "At the Edges. An Interview by Frederic Tuten," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1999, p. 17).

About David Salle

Born in 1952 in Oklahoma, David Salle grew up in Wichita, Kansas. In 1970, he began his studies at the newly founded California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, where he worked with John Baldessari. After earning a BFA in 1973 and an MFA in 1975, both from CalArts, Salle moved to New York, where he has lived since.

Like many artists of his generation, David Salle initially drew inspiration for his rich visual vocabulary from existing pictures. Based on models from art history, advertisements, design, and everyday culture, as well as, most significantly, his own photography, Salle creates an assemblage with manifold cultural references. Since the mid-80s, his paintings have included allusions to the works of the Baroque painters, from Velázquez and Bernini, to the Post-Impressionist Cézanne, to Giacometti and Magritte, and to American art both post and pre-war.

In 1985 Salle designed the sets and costumes for the opera, *Birth of the Poet*, with libretto by Kathy Acker under the direction of Richard Foreman, commissioned by the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since then he has designed sets and costumes for more than 15 ballets by choreographer Karole Armitage. Their ballet and opera collaborations have been staged in theaters around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera House, the Paris Opera, and Sadlers Wells, London. In 1986, Salle was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship for his work in the theater.

Since his first solo museum exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam in 1983, Salle has continued to evolve as a painter intent on integrating multiple points of authorial agency into an unprecedented gestalt; his originality and inventiveness have been manifest in many distinct series including the *Tapestry Paintings* (1989–91), *Ballet Paintings* (1992–93), *Early Product Paintings* (1993), *Vortex Painting* (2004–2005), and *Battles/ Allegories* (2009–2010). In the 1990s, he added sculpture to his oeuvre and also began exhibiting his black-and-white photographs, many of which were made in preparation for



SKARSTEDT

canvases. He also directed the feature film *Search and Destroy* (1995), which was produced by Martin Scorsese and features Ethan Hawke, Dennis Hopper, and Christopher Walken.

Salle's paintings have been shown in museums and galleries worldwide for over 35 years. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Whitney Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; MoMA Vienna; Menil Collection, Houston; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; the Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, and the Guggenheim Bilbao. He was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Dallas Contemporary in 2015. He has participated in major international expositions including Documenta 7 (1982), Venice Biennale (1982 and 1993), Whitney Biennial (1983, 1985, and 1991), Paris Biennale (1985), and Carnegie International (1985). Salle lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Salle is also a prolific writer on art. His essays and interviews have appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Modern Painters*, *The Paris Review*, and *Art News*, as well as numerous exhibition catalogs and anthologies. He was for some years a regular contributor to *Town & Country Magazine*. Since the fall of 2017, his essays have been prominently featured in *The New York Review of Books*. Salle is the first visual artist ever to appear as a writer in that journal. His collection of critical essays, *How to See*, was published by W.W. Norton in 2016.

About Skarstedt

Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists. The New York gallery's program focuses on concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present museum-quality exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt's London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James's, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as 'ministerial street' in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Jean-Michel Basquiat, George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, KAWS, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, Sue Williams, and Christopher Wool.

Image Details: David Salle, *Mingus in Mexico*, 1990, oil and acrylic on canvas, 95 1/8 x 122 3/8 inches (241.6 x 310.8 cm) © David Salle / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

