

# FRESTONIAN GALLERY

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## TESS JARAY / PAUL DE MONCHAUX

### CORRESPONDENCES

**Exhibition open by appointment only from 12th November 2020**

To arrange a visit please contact [gallery@frestoniangallery.com](mailto:gallery@frestoniangallery.com) / 0203 9041865

**Megan Piper and Frestonian Gallery** are delighted to present an exhibition of work by **Tess Jaray** and **Paul de Monchaux**. Having studied together at the Slade in the late 1950s, the artists met again in 1986 during the Stoke-on-Trent Garden Festival, where de Monchaux's work was included in the Whitechapel Gallery Garden and Jaray presented her first brick floor-piece. As both artists pursued public art commissions through the 1990s, their dialogue continued and this exhibition brings together their work in a gallery for the first time. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue of excerpts from nearly fifteen years of email letters, where the two artists discuss their work, shared influences, challenges and common ground.

As Jaray notes in an email from 2006:

*There are several things you mention where I see we share the same territory, or drink from the same cup. You speak about the work being 'based on architecture'. It is the same for me, although I would put it differently: I have always thought that the influence of architecture for me has to do mostly with its emotive impact. How a building, or structure, or place, makes me feel. And I try to use that, somehow, in the paintings.*

Focusing on recent work by both artists, the resonance of their correspondence is immediately apparent in this exhibition. De Monchaux's sculptures are developed from a geometric core and he notes: '*Among its many uses, geometry provides a means to coordinate the seen with the sensed. The process itself has its own poetry regardless of the application*'. The plaster works use the same geometry as their starting point as his earlier *Volutes*. All of his works in this exhibition were completed during lockdown.

Both artists were profoundly influenced by visits to Italy early in their careers – de Monchaux in 1954 and Jaray in 1960 – experiences that they reflect on in the catalogue. Jaray's trip, the result of a travel grant when she finished at the Slade, has inspired and informed her exploration of perspective, space and colour for the last six decades. The exhibition includes three of her *Predella* paintings – referring to the Italian term for the long horizontal structure at the base of an altarpiece – first encountered by Jaray when she visited Florence and Rome.

The exhibition also includes Jaray's recent *One Hundred Years* series – the title playfully referring to the length of time it would take a snail to circumnavigate the world. Collectively, she and de Monchaux have invested more than a hundred years in their artistic pursuits and this exhibition is testament to their success.

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## Notes on the Artists

**Tess Jaray** was born in Vienna in 1937 and moved to England in 1938. She studied at St Martin's College of Art and Design (1954–57) and the Slade School of Fine Art (1957–60) where she was taught by William Coldstream and attended the lectures of Ernst Gombrich. Jaray was the first woman to teach at the Slade and taught there for over 30 years, from 1968–99. Jaray has exhibited extensively throughout her career. Solo exhibitions include Whitechapel Gallery, London (1973), the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (1984) and Serpentine Gallery, London (1988). Public collections include the British Museum, Arts Council Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Belvedere, Vienna. Over the last twenty years, Jaray has completed a succession of major public art projects. She was made an Honorary Fellow of RIBA (Royal Institute for British Architects) in 1995 and a Royal Academician in 2010. She lives and works in London.

**Paul de Monchaux** was born in Montreal in 1934. He spent an itinerant childhood living in Ireland, Australia, North and South America and studied at The Art Students League in New York (1952-54) before moving to London in 1955 to study at the Slade. He taught full-time at art schools for nearly three decades after leaving the Slade – at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Goldsmiths College and finally Camberwell School of Art, where he was Head of Sculpture and Head of Fine Art until he retired in 1986 to concentrate on his work. De Monchaux has exhibited extensively and has been included in group shows at the ICA (1960), Camden Arts Centre (1979), Hayward and Serpentine Galleries (1983), Henry Moore Institute (2012) and had his first solo exhibition at a private gallery with Megan Piper in 2013. Since 1986 he has carried out large-scale public sculpture commissions in London, Cambridge, Birmingham, Norwich, Coventry Shrewsbury, Southampton and St Lawrence, Jersey. He lives and works in London.

For more information on the artists and the exhibition please visit [www.frestoniangallery.com](http://www.frestoniangallery.com)