

FRESTONIAN GALLERY

ADRIAN BERG

LATE STYLE MAJOR WORKS



Private View:

Exhibition dates:

Wednesday 17th Sept, 6-8pm

18th Sept – 1st Nov 2025

Scan code to view exhibition works

Frestonian Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of major works from the second half of Adrian Berg's career, as part of an extraordinary 20 months of renewed focus, recognition and celebration of Berg's innovative and incredible output as one of the great British painters of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This exhibition is a window into his exuberant and highly influential late style, whilst focused presentations at The Armory Show (New York, September 2025) and Frieze Masters (London, October 2025) will shed further light on his earlier, equally innovative works.

The Frestonian exhibitions and art fair showings are bookended by the first major solo show of Berg's work in the United States (Hunter Dunbar Projects, New York, November 2024) and his first museum retrospective exhibition in Asia (Hiroshima MOCA, Japan, January 2025).

The path to the 'new' style began with the impending move from his Gloucester Gate apartment in the mid 1980s. Berg had had word as early as 1984 that the rent-controlled lease on his eyrie overlooking Regent's Park would not be renewed, and as such his aerial perspective on his long-running subject would be lost. This prompted his tentative engagement with new subjects from 1984-1987, most notably Kew Gardens and Syon Park on the western fringe of central London (from which period three oils on canvas are included in the exhibition) and occasional trips to the Lake District in the north of England. It was, however, only in 1988 with his permanent move to Hove that Berg's near-exclusive relationship with Regent's Park was finally broken, after which new pathways truly began to open.

Particularly fruitful new ground(s) for Berg were the extraordinary gardens at Stourhead – a stately home in the south west English county of Wiltshire. The gardens, laid down from 1740-1780 in the Romantic style, complete with a scattering of temples and a Palladian bridge, were clearly a powerful and joyous inspiration to Berg, and gave rise to some of the boldest works of his later career. The broader vistas gave rise to an expansion in both the treatment of individual forms and the scale of the canvases themselves. The near-pointillist detail of the Regent's Park works here gave way to bold planes intersecting planes of colour, often spread across vast diptychs and triptychs, mirroring the newly expanded horizons before him.

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With this move towards broader and bolder levels of simplification of form the use of paint also freed up considerably – most likely inspired by Berg's increasing use of watercolour, both as a medium in itself and as a method of bringing the colours of his subject back home to the studio (whereas previously in Regent's Park a monochrome ink sketch would suffice as the colours could be checked with a glance out of the window).

This bold new style, beginning always in free-flowing watercolour (Berg never worked from photographs – always relying on his own sketches and meticulous notes), would see Berg dynamically reimagine the ordered natural world for the next 23 years, from quiet late summer days in Wiltshire to the sultry humidity and explosive flora of Thailand, to the sapphire blue skies and searing heat of Australia. A late style, and late expansion of horizons, for a painter who had already created one of the great bodies of work in modern landscape painting. An incredible and final second act.

Adrian Berg (1929-2011) – Notes on the artist

Adrian Berg was born in London in 1929. He studied art in London, first at Central St Martin's, then Chelsea College of Arts and finally at the Royal College of Art. Later he would go on to teach at the Royal College, becoming senior tutor in 1987. Berg's paintings have been exhibited in all major UK institutions including, amongst many others the Tate, Hayward Gallery, Royal Academy, Victoria & Albert Museum, Fitzwilliam and Pallant House Gallery.

In 1986, Berg was given a major retrospective at The Serpentine Gallery and with the Arts Council that subsequently toured the country, with a further retrospective at the Barbican in 1993. He has also exhibited extensively internationally. In 1992, he was elected as a Royal Academician, and in 1994 he became an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Art. His work is held in many private and public collections, including the Arts Council Collection, the Tate, the Government Art Collection, the British Museum, Manchester City Art Gallery, The Royal Academy, Hiroshima MOCA, Tokyo MCA and the Victoria & Albert Museum.

An exhibition catalogue – 'Adrian Berg, The Afternoon Sun, Exhibitions 2025' covering this exhibition, as well as future presentations at The Armory Show, New York and Frieze Masters, London, is available from Frestonian Gallery.

For further information on the exhibition please contact gallery@frestoniangallery.com