

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

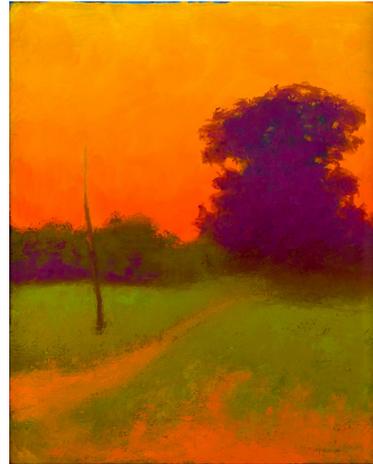
Venus Over Manhattan Announces Representation of Artist Richard Mayhew



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** announced today that the gallery now represents artist **Richard Mayhew**. This announcement follows the gallery’s critically acclaimed exhibition, “Richard Mayhew: Natural Order,” which closed on June 23rd, 2023. The exhibition marked the gallery’s debut presentation of Mayhew’s work and its inaugural presentation at 39 Great Jones Street. The gallery will continue to collaborate with ACA Galleries in support of Richard Mayhew’s work.

Richard Mayhew (b. 1924, Amityville, NY) has garnered wide renown in a career spanning more than seven decades for vivid, improvisational paintings that render emotional visions of the American landscape. An artist of African American and Native American descent, Mayhew draws upon his dual ancestry in his work, creating a unique visual language that explores the intersection of nature and culture, memory, and identity. He is the only living member of the storied Spiral Group, a collective of African American artists who came together in 1963 to discuss their involvement with the civil rights movement and the

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shifting landscape of American art. At 99 years old, Mayhew continues to make paintings and works on paper that push landscape toward total abstraction, foregoing the limits of representation in pursuit of pure color.

Adam Lindemann, founder of Venus Over Manhattan, commented, "We are delighted to announce our representation of Richard Mayhew, an artist whose engages his own profound exploration of the American landscape. Richard is a trailblazer: dedicated to color and clear-eyed in his pursuit of his singular vision. We look forward to supporting his ongoing work and sharing his art with ever broader and more diverse audiences."



Born in Amityville, New York, Mayhew's deep relationship with the landscape began at an early age. He started painting on the shores of Long Island Sound under James Willson Peale, who mentored him before moving to Brooklyn, in 1941. He studied at the Brooklyn Museum School of Art with Edwin Dickinson, Reuben Tam, and spent time at the Cedar Tavern with important Abstract Expressionist painters and members of the New York School. His first solo exhibition was positively reviewed in *Arts Magazine*: "Mayhew paints so well in a realist idiom that his pictures, at first glance, are easy to take for granted. The second glance convinces one that Mayhew is a Tonalist."

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Traveling grants from the John Hay Whitney Fellowship and the Ford Foundation funded two years of study for him and his family in Europe, and upon their return to New York, Mayhew helped to found Spiral, a New York-based collective of African American artists who came together in the months before the 1963 March on Washington. Mayhew is the only living member of the group, which included Emma Amos, Romare Bearden, Felrath Hines, Norman Lewis, and Hale Woodruff, among others. Mayhew played a key role in the group, operating as a bridge between the collective's older and younger members. He participated in the group's first—and what became its only—exhibition, "First Group Showing: Works in Black and White," which ran from May 14 through June 5, 1965, at 147 Christopher Street in New York.

Mayhew's work met positive reception early on, featuring prominently in major exhibitions around the country. These included landmark shows like "30 Black Artists" at the MFA Boston; "Black Artists: Two Generations," at the Newark Museum; and Dr. David C. Driskell's monumental survey "Two Centuries of Black American Art." He was active in the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, cofounded by Benny Andrews and Clifford R. Joseph in response to the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition "Harlem on My Mind." In 1978, the Studio Museum in Harlem mounted a retrospective of his work, and he features as the final entry in Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson's tome *A History of African-American Artists from 1792 to the Present*.

In recent years, Mayhew's work has received renewed attention and praise, featuring in prominent exhibitions at major institutions. In 2020, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art announced a major gift from Pamela J. Joyner and Alfred J. Giuffrida, which included six major paintings by Richard Mayhew that went immediately on view. In 2022, the Heckscher Museum of Art mounted a retrospective of Mayhew's work, and the South Etna Montauk Foundation mounted a solo exhibition in Montauk. He was profiled by the *New York Times* on the occasion of his exhibition at Venus Over Manhattan, and a retrospective of his work will open at the Sonoma Valley Museum of Art in September 2023.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Richard Mayhew was born in 1924 in Amityville, New York. He studied at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, the Art Students League, and Columbia University. In 1978, The Studio Museum in Harlem hosted a retrospective exhibition of his work titled "Richard Mayhew: An American Abstractionist." Mayhew's work has been the subject of numerous international solo presentations, including recent exhibitions at Venus Over Manhattan, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; South Etna Montauk Foundation, Montauk; and the Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington. Mayhew's work frequently features in major institutional exhibitions, including recent presentations at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; Hauser & Wirth, Southampton; Detroit Institute of Arts; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Brooklyn Museum; The Broad, Los Angeles; Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, de Young Museum, San Francisco; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. His work is held in the permanent collections of numerous public institutions, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Richard Mayhew is Professor Emeritus at Pennsylvania State University and previously taught at numerous institutions including Hunter College, Smith College, the Art Students League, Pratt Institute, and the Brooklyn Museum Art School. He is among the youngest members ever elected to the National Academy of Design, and is the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships, and residencies. Richard Mayhew lives and works in Soquel, California.

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39 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012

55 Great Jones Street
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GALLERY HOURS

Monday – Friday
11:00 am – 6:00 pm

PRESS CONTACT

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IMAGE CREDITS

Richard Mayhew in his Soquel studio, 2023.

Mood Indigo, c. 1995. Oil on canvas; 30 x 40 in (76.2 x 101.6 cm)

Interlude, n.d. Oil on canvas; 30 x 24 in (76.2 x 61 cm)

Untitled, 2014. Watercolor on paper; 10 1/2 x 14 in (26.7 x 35.6 cm)

Montalvo, 2005. Oil on canvas; 48 x 60 in (121.9 x 152.4 cm)

Installation view, *Richard Mayhew: Natural Order*, 2023.

All works by Richard Mayhew, courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan, New York.