

MCCABE FINE ART

Damien Hirst The Psalms

McCabe Fine Art (August 29 – October 22, 2014)

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McCabe Fine Art

Artillerigatan 40

114 45 Stockholm

Sweden

McCabe Fine Art is proud to present the British artist Damien Hirst's first solo exhibition in Sweden. Known for producing art that breaks boundaries and explores the relationships between art, science, religion, death and beauty, Hirst has developed a wide-ranging artistic practice that includes installation, sculpture, painting and drawing. In the twenty-six years since he emerged as a leading member of the Young British Artists (YBA) movement with 'Freeze', the seminal exhibition curated by Hirst in 1988, the artist has risen to international fame with iconic works that include the shark suspended in formaldehyde (*The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991) and the diamond-encrusted skull (*For the Love of God*, 2007). Painting has also remained an important aspect of Hirst's practice with prolific series including the 'Spot Paintings', 'Spin Paintings' and the 'Kaleidoscopes'; in which vibrantly colored butterfly wings are arranged in intricate patterns and stuck into household gloss paint.

In 2008 Hirst created a series of one hundred and fifty 'Psalm' paintings, each named after an Old Testament psalm. The works on display at McCabe Fine Art will be the most significant selection of 'Psalms' ever to have been exhibited together. As part of Hirst's 'Kaleidoscope' series, these striking pieces touch on all religions and offer a variety of readings that range from the specific to the universal. The symbolism referenced in the 'Psalms' evokes both spirituality and the butterfly's natural metamorphosis. They allude to both Christian iconography, and stained glass church windows, whilst also seeming to possess the meditative abstract patterns of Hindu and Buddhist mandalas.

Hirst attributes his long-term fascination with the butterfly to their universal appeal, once stating: "I think rather than be personal you have to find universal triggers: everyone's frightened of glass, everyone's frightened of sharks, everyone loves butterflies." The patterns of wings can't help but celebrate the aesthetic and lyrical splendor of life. As with much of Hirst's work, the 'Psalms' also have a darker, more complex meaning. Deceptively hopeful and bright, these paintings hover between life and death. Although undeniably dazzling manifestations of the natural world, each also constitutes a somber *memento mori*. Hirst thus raises the question of whether his chosen imagery should be considered to represent that which is beautiful, poignant and uplifting or perhaps merely acts as a reminder that all existence, while it may be beautiful, is ultimately fleeting and fragile.

A fully-illustrated book of the complete 'Psalm' paintings is to be published by Other Criteria.

Damien Hirst

Damien Hirst was born in 1965 in Bristol and grew up in Leeds. In 1984 he moved to London, where he worked in construction before studying for a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths college from 1986 to 1989. Whilst in his second year, he conceived and curated a group exhibition entitled 'Freeze'. The show is commonly acknowledged to have been the launching point not only for Hirst, but for a generation of British artists.

Since the late 1980s, Hirst has used a varied practice of installation, sculpture, painting and drawing to explore the complex relationship between art, life and death, explaining: "Art's about life and it can't really be about anything else ... there isn't anything else." Through his work, he investigates and challenges contemporary belief systems, and dissects the uncertainties at the heart of human experience.

Since 1987, over 80 solo Damien Hirst exhibitions have taken place worldwide and his work has been included in over 260 group shows. Hirst's solo exhibitions include Qatar Museums Authority, ALRIWAQ Doha (2013–2014); Tate Modern, London (2012); Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (2010); Oceanographic Museum, Monaco (2010); The Wallace Collection, London (2009–2010); Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (2009); Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (2008); Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo (2005); and Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (2004). He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1995. The artist currently lives and works in Gloucester, Devon and London.

McCabe Fine Art

Noted art advisor, dealer and collector Paul Frank McCabe opened McCabe Fine Art in Stockholm, Sweden in 2013. An extension of his eighteen years of art market experience and connoisseurship, the beautifully renovated showroom in central Östermalm presents works by modern and contemporary masters as well as emerging talents. Through a program of curated, thematic and monographic exhibitions, McCabe Fine Art brings new voices to Scandinavia's dynamic international art scene.

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