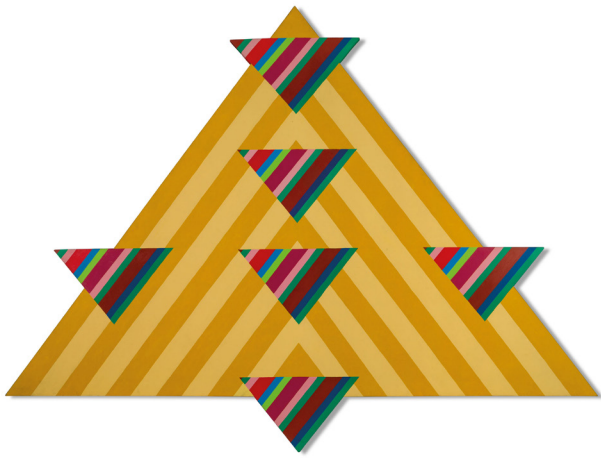
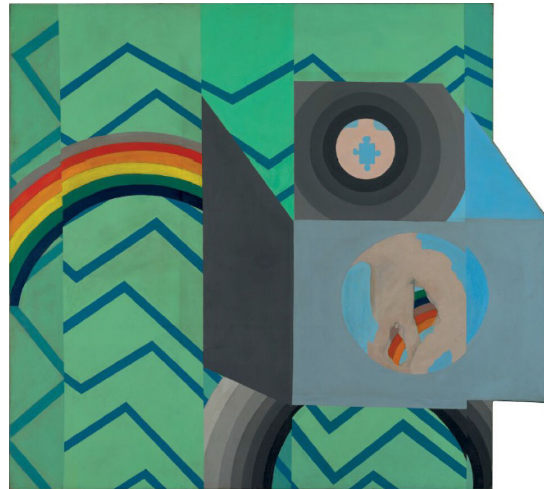


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© Derek Boshier, *Highlights*, 1966



© Derek Boshier, *Viewer*, 1963

The Way Forward: Derek Boshier and the Sixties

With works by: Peter Blake, Derek Boshier, Pauline Boty, Patrick Caulfield, David Hockney, Allen Jones, R.B. Kitaj, Peter Phillips, Richard Smith and Joe Tilson

Curated with Marco Livingstone

Preview: 24 April, 6 – 8 PM (GMT)

Exhibition: 25 April – 28 June, 2025

Gazelli Art House London is pleased to present *The Way Forward: Derek Boshier and the Sixties*, the first posthumous solo exhibition dedicated to Derek Boshier (1937–2024). Curated with renowned art historian Marco Livingstone, the exhibition focuses on works from the 1960s and charts the transformations in Boshier's worldview and visual style, in parallel to wider changes in society. This landmark presentation revisits Boshier's pivotal transition from pioneering Pop figuration to bold geometric abstraction, a shift catalysed by his travels to India in 1962 under a Commonwealth scholarship.

Among the first exponents of British Pop Art, Boshier distinguished himself from contemporaries such as Peter Blake and Pauline Boty through his unique brand of satirical social commentary. Together with fellow RCA students David Hockney, Allen Jones, Peter Phillips and R.B. Kitaj, he participated in the landmark *Young Contemporaries* exhibition at R.B.A. Galleries London in 1962, which propelled Pop Art to public prominence.

As early as 1963 Boshier had developed a distinctive approach to abstraction, embracing shaped canvases and vibrant geometric compositions. Moving away from his earlier more figurative Pop works, Boshier began employing dynamic colour contrasts and layered forms to create spatial ambiguity and a sense of movement. Although aligned with the aesthetics of post-painterly abstraction in the US by artists such as Kenneth Noland and Ellsworth Kelly, Boshier's pieces are infused with the experiences when travelling in India, alongside the British Pop iconography he was so instrumental in shaping.

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Boshier's journey to India was transformative — his immersion in Hindu mythology and street iconography informed a strikingly new visual language. He encountered imagery woven into everyday life, from temple icons to barbershop posters, shaping a body of work that blended Pop sensibilities with symbolic motifs. His return to the UK marked a decisive shift — his compositions became bolder, more architectural and attuned to the mechanics of visual perception.

The painting *Viewer* (1963) is a pivotal work in Boshier's formal evolution. It contains figures depicted through viewfinder or window-like shapes and rainbow motifs, but departs from a rectangular canvas format through the asymmetric shaped support, reinforcing the illusion of depth in the composition. Following on from this Boshier went further towards sculptural reliefs such as *Rainbow Wings* (1963) with hard-edged chevrons and kaleidoscopic grids, amplifying a sense of dynamic expansion beyond the frame. These works speak to Boshier's enduring fascination with how media, advertising and urban space influence perception.

Paintings from this period were showcased in the seminal *New Generation* exhibition at Whitechapel Art Gallery (1964) and at Robert Fraser Gallery (1965). They interrogate perception and representation through complex spatial arrangements and optical interplay. This experimentation led to bold, structured abstractions that shared affinities with the architectural rhythms of urban space. Shaped canvases such as *Highlights* (1966), with its dramatic array of inverted triangles, explore the illusion of depth through geometric fragmentation.

Reflecting on his own practice, Boshier once remarked: "I like to think of them as Pop abstraction. I looked at neon signs and that's where it came out. India changed my life. I became a much more tolerant person. And I became a fatalist. Fatalists are optimists."

The latter half of the 1960s saw Boshier increasingly engage with conceptual and political currents in art. Questioning the function of painting in an era of mass-media saturation, he expanded his practice to incorporate ready-made materials, film and text-based works, aligning himself with socially engaged artmaking. His active participation in political movements — campaigning against the Vietnam War, nuclear armament and systemic racism — underscored his commitment to art as a tool for cultural critique.

Gazelli artist and contemporary of Boshier, Jann Haworth, describes these paintings as "a conversation stopper... no pigeonholing into Op or Pop; the painting is silent vision. A space at the heart of art town, a time and place to indulge in just looking, taking a long moment." They embody Boshier's ability to balance precision with raw energy, a visual dynamism that continues to resonate today.

Complementing the presentation of Boshier's paintings from the 1960s in the gallery's main space will be a selection of works by artists who were also part of the contingent at the Royal College of Art associated with the rise of Pop Art in Britain: from the 1959 intake with Boshier are R. B. Kitaj, David Hockney, Allen Jones and Peter Phillips; Pauline Boty, who began her studies a year earlier in the Stained Glass department and became a fast friend; Patrick Caulfield, who arrived at the College a year after Boshier; and three artists, Peter Blake, Joe Tilson and Richard Smith, who had completed their studies at the College in the mid-1950s but who became friends, mentors, and sources of inspiration to the younger artists including Boshier himself. Ken Russell's celebrated BBC film *Pop Goes the Easel*, which introduced Pop Art to the general public, featured Boshier alongside Blake, Boty, and Phillips.

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The exhibition also features key works by these artists, each shaping the trajectory of British Pop Art. David Hockney's *3 Snakes* (1962) subverts abstraction with coded homoerotic imagery, blending illusionism and flatness in a playful challenge to formalist painting. Pauline Boty's *Red Manoeuvre* (1962) captures the energy of the Swinging Sixties, using bold colours and a red-uniformed figure to explore female sexuality and cultural iconography. Peter Blake's *Sammy Davis Jnr* (1957–1960) reflects his fascination with celebrity culture, while Joe Tilson's *Page 16: Ecology, Air, Earth, Fire, Water* (1969) merges screenprint and wood relief to address countercultural politics and his exploration of the Four Elements. Peter Phillips's *One Five Times/ Sharpshooter* (1960) embodies the graphic dynamism of Pop, and Patrick Caulfield's *Pony* (1964) marks his shift toward a refined, hard-edged style. Allen Jones' *Cockpit* (1963) extends his fascination with the canvas as object previously seen in his bus paintings of 1962 and with the fusion of figuration with languages of abstraction. Richard Smith's *A Whole Year a Half a Day VIII* (1966), one of a series of twelve three-dimensional paintings referencing the calendar months and the hours on a clock, provides abstract equivalents for the prosaic objects they reference, taking Pop concerns into more minimalist territory. Together, these works highlight the breadth of Pop Art's experimentation, from figuration to abstraction, capturing a movement deeply attuned to the cultural pulse of its time.

Boshier's 1960s abstractions cement his position within a transatlantic dialogue of formal experimentation while remaining deeply personal in their conceptual rigour. His ability to synthesise the energy of advertising culture with the concerns of abstraction speaks to his enduring relevance. *The Way Forward: Derek Boshier and the Sixties* offers a vital reconsideration of his artistic legacy.

Notes to Editors

- Boshier's first posthumous exhibition follows solo shows at Gazelli Art House, including *Reinventor* (2023), *Icarus and K Pop* (2021), *Night and Snow* (2019) and *On The Road* (2017), as well as *Image in Revolt* at Wolverhampton Art Gallery (2023), curated by Helen Little.
- Boshier's work is held in major public collections, including Tate Britain, the V&A, London, the Arts Council Collection, UK, MoMA, New York, Yale Center for British Art, and the Dallas Museum of Art.
- Talks will run throughout May and June, alongside a publication available for purchase.
- The exhibition follows Boshier, Boty and Jann Haworth's inclusion in Gazelli Art House's debut at the Dallas Art Fair (April 2025).
- In 1962, Boshier, Hockney, Jones and Phillips featured in *Image in Progress* at Grabowski Gallery, curated by Jasia Reichardt.
- Gazelli Art House recently held a Boty solo show (2023/24) and presented her paintings and collages at Frieze Masters (2024). In March 2025, BBC4 aired *Pauline Boty: I Am the Sixties*.
- Hockney, Blake, Boty and Tilson are currently featured in *Iconic: Portraiture from Francis Bacon to Andy Warhol* at The Holburne Museum, Bath.
- The exhibition coincides with a major David Hockney display at Fondation Louis Vuitton, opening April 2025 in Paris.
- References: *Pop Art: A Continuing History*, by Marco Livingstone; published by Thames and Hudson, 1990. *Pop Art UK: British Pop Art 1956-1972*, edited by Marco Livingstone and Walter Guadagnini; published by Silvana Editoriale, 2004. *British Pop*, by Marco Livingstone; published by Museo De Bellas Artes de Bilbao, 2005. *Derek Boshier: Rethink/Re-entry*, edited by Paul Gorman; published by Thames and Hudson, 2015. *Derek Boshier: Reinventor*, edited by Helen Little with a foreword by Marco Livingstone; published by Lund Humphries, 2023. *Derek Boshier: Drawings*, edited by Leslie Jones; published by Hat & Beard Press, 2024.

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About Derek Boshier

Derek Boshier (b. 1937, UK — d. 2024, USA) was an English artist who moved to Los Angeles in 1997 and spent the remaining years of his life there. His practice is characterised by astute and wry observations of popular culture. Among the first exponents of British Pop Art, what distinguished Boshier from contemporaries — including Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield and Pauline Boty — was his trademark brand of satirical social commentary. Together with fellow RCA students David Hockney, Allen Jones, Peter Philips and R. B. Kitaj, he participated in the landmark 1962 *Young Contemporaries* exhibition that brought Pop Art to the attention of the wider public. Boshier worked in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, collage and sculpture. In the 1970s, he expanded from painting to photography, film, video, assemblage and installations, yet he returned to painting by the end of the decade. On what shapes his work, Boshier commented: “Most important is life itself, my sources tend to be current events, personal events, social and political situations, and a sense of place and places”. Boshier’s work has appeared in many museum exhibitions, including: the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Tate Britain and British Museum, London; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris. In 2016 Boshier was the recipient of the Honorary Fellowship of the RCA as well as receiving the Guggenheim fellowship and NEA award for the arts. Notably too, he was an accomplished teacher and lecturer. 2021’s *Icarus and K-Pop* at Gazelli Art House saw a new series of large scale works by Boshier, informed by the Korean programme King of Mask Singers and the myth of Icarus, a story of ambition and failure, reworked by the artist to critique modern ideologies and cultures.

About Marco Livingstone

Marco Livingstone is an art historian, writer and independent curator who has published widely on art since the 1960s, particularly on Pop Art and on figurative painters of the postwar period. Among his numerous Pop-related publications are monographs and major exhibition catalogues on Clive Barker, Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield, Jim Dine, David Hockney, Allen Jones, R. B. Kitaj, Gerald Laing, George Segal, Richard Smith, Joe Tilson and Tom Wesselmann. He has curated major survey exhibitions of Pop Art as an international phenomenon for the Royal Academy in London (1991), touring to Cologne, Madrid and Montreal, for the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon (1997) and in Japan (1987), as well as major shows devoted specifically to British Pop Art in Modena (2004) and Bilbao (2006). His book *Pop Art: A Continuing History*, published by Thames and Hudson in 1990, remains in print as the most comprehensive study of the movement. He first met Derek Boshier in early 1976 when researching his M.A. dissertation for the Courtauld Institute of Art and has written several essays on his work since then, including a preface to *Derek Boshier: Reinventor* (2023), published shortly before the artist’s passing.

About the Gallery

Founded in 2010 by Mila Askarova, Gazelli Art House represents an international roster of artists, from leading figures in Post-War movements such as Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism to ultra-contemporary voices redefining art in the digital age. The gallery champions artists who challenge convention through the creative exploration of a variety of media. Along with its sister site in Baku, the gallery also specialises in art from Azerbaijan and its neighbours, fostering cross-cultural dialogue. In 2015 we launched GAZELL.iO, an online platform specifically supporting innovation in art and technologies.

For further information, please contact: press@gazelliarthouse.com.

About the Artists

Sir Peter Blake (b. 1932, UK) is a pioneering British Pop artist known for co-designing The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover (1967) with Jann Haworth. His work, influenced by folk art, advertising, and popular culture, incorporates painting, sculpture, and collage. A Royal College of Art graduate (1956), he was an early adopter of pop culture imagery, predating American Pop Art. Knighted in 2002, Blake has exhibited widely, with major retrospectives at Tate Liverpool (2007) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1973). His work is held in Tate, MoMA, the V&A, the British Museum, and the Sir Peter Blake Music Art Gallery in Leeds.

Pauline Boty (b. 1938, London, UK – d. 1966, UK) was a pioneering British Pop artist whose work boldly celebrated femininity while critiquing the male-dominated society of her time. A graduate of Wimbledon School of Art (1954) and the Royal College of Art (1958), she was one of the few women at the forefront of the British Pop Art movement. Her vibrant paintings, collages, and stained glass works often depicted cultural icons she admired, interwoven with themes of female sexuality and gender inequality. Despite her brief career, Boty's legacy continues to grow, with her work held in major collections including Tate Britain, the National Portrait Gallery, London, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, the Stained Glass Museum, Ely, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington.

Patrick Caulfield (b. 1936, London, UK – d. 2005, London, UK) was a British painter and printmaker known for his striking still life and interiors, defined by bold black outlines, flat fields of colour, and a refined sense of composition. A graduate of Chelsea School of Art (1956–1960) and the Royal College of Art (1960–1963), he was a contemporary of David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj. Though associated with British Pop Art, Caulfield saw himself as a formalist, drawing influence from Braque and Matisse. His work evolved to incorporate elements of photorealism and trompe-l'œil, playing with depth and illusion. Nominated for the Turner Prize (1987) and elected Royal Academician (1993), he exhibited widely, with major retrospectives at Tate Britain (2013), the Serpentine Gallery (1992), and the Hayward Gallery (1999). His work is held in, amongst others, the Tate and the Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, Luxembourg.

David Hockney (b. 1937, UK) is one of the most influential artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. He studied at Bradford School of Art (1953–57) and the Royal College of Art (1959–62), where he won the gold medal for his exceptional draughtsmanship and innovative painting. Moving to Los Angeles in 1963, he developed his iconic depictions of pools, interiors, and urban life, often infused with psychological depth and homoerotic themes. Restlessly inventive, Hockney has worked across painting, printmaking, photography, and digital media, as well as designing stage sets for leading opera houses. Major exhibitions include *David Hockney: A Bigger Picture* (Royal Academy, 2012) and retrospectives at Tate Britain, Centre Pompidou, and The Met. His work has been exhibited internationally with notable solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; the Bayeux Museum, Normandy; the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris; and LACMA, Los Angeles.

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Allen Jones (b. 1937, UK) is a leading figure in British Pop Art, known for his bold explorations of the human form across painting, sculpture, and printmaking. He studied at Hornsey College of Art (1955–59) and the Royal College of Art (1959–60), emerging alongside the first wave of British Pop artists. His provocative, highly stylised works—often influenced by Surrealism and German Expressionism—blend vibrant colour with themes of desire and identity. In 1963, he won the Prix des Jeunes Artistes at the Paris Biennale. His work is held in major collections, including Tate, MoMA, and the V&A. Retrospectives have been staged at Tate Britain, the Serpentine Gallery, and the Walker Art Gallery. A Royal Academician since 1986, Jones continues to shape contemporary visual culture from his studios in London and Oxfordshire.

R.B. Kitaj (b. 1932, US – d. 2007, US) was a pivotal figure in British Pop Art, known for his intellectually charged approach to figuration. Born in Cleveland, he studied at Cooper Union, the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, the Ruskin School, and the Royal College of Art, where he emerged alongside David Hockney and Allen Jones. Blending bold colour with historical and literary references, Kitaj’s work engaged with themes of identity, exile, and memory. In 1976, he curated *The Human Clay*, defining the “School of London” and championing narrative figuration. His work is held in major collections, including Tate, MoMA, and The Met. Kitaj relocated to Los Angeles in 1997, where he lived until his death in 2007.

Peter Phillips (b. 1939, UK) is a key figure in British Pop Art, known for his dynamic compositions that fuse popular culture with a distinctive, often ‘sinister’ edge. Born in Birmingham, he studied at Birmingham College of Art (1955–59) before enrolling at the Royal College of Art (1959–62), where he emerged alongside David Hockney, Allen Jones, and R.B. Kitaj. Phillips’ work blends the glossy aesthetics of advertising with a subversive undercurrent, layering bold colours, mechanical precision, and surreal juxtapositions. His paintings, prints, and collages have been widely exhibited, including at Tate Modern, the Royal Academy, The Met, and the National Museum of Art, Osaka. A restless innovator, he continues to shape contemporary visual culture.

Richard Smith (b. 1931, UK – d. 2016, US) was a pivotal figure in post-war British painting, bridging Pop Art and abstraction. Born in Letchworth, he studied at St Albans School of Art and the Royal College of Art before moving to New York in 1959 on a Harkness Fellowship. Smith’s work redefined painting, incorporating the aesthetics of advertising, film, and consumer culture while pushing the medium into three-dimensional space. Though initially acclaimed—his first retrospective was held at Whitechapel in 1966—his large-scale abstractions later diverged from mainstream trends. His work is held in major collections, including Tate Britain, the Whitney Museum, and the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. A transatlantic innovator, Smith’s influence continues to resonate.

Joe Tilson (b. 1928, UK – d. 2023, UK) was a founding figure of British Pop Art, celebrated for his bold use of colour, symbolism, and experimental approach to printmaking. After training as a carpenter, he studied at St. Martin’s School of Art (1949–52) and the Royal College of Art (1952–55), where he emerged alongside Peter Blake, Allen Jones, and Patrick Caulfield. Tilson’s early work embraced the visual language of consumer culture, but by the 1970s, he shifted towards themes of mythology, history, and nature. A lifelong printmaker, his work spans painting, multiples, and constructions. His art is held in major collections, including Tate, MoMA, the V&A, Stedelijk Museum, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Yale Center for British Art, and the Walker Art Center. A Royal Academician, Tilson remained an innovator throughout his career.