

Ed Clark

WEISS BERLIN

Bundesallee 221, 2nd Floor

September 3, 2017–October 14, 2017

Maybe you've heard of Ed Clark, but even if you haven't, you're in for a treat with this exhibition. Though a part of the Abstract Expressionist movement of the 1950s and an early adopter of working with shaped canvases, Clark—who was born in Louisiana in 1926 and grew up in Chicago—has retained a relatively low profile, only recently receiving a solo show at the Art Institute of Chicago, in 2013. Here, he presents paintings made between 1978 and 2013: large-scale canvases of brightly colored acrylics, fluid and forceful, as well as smaller pieces on paper of acrylic and dried pigment, which hum with a quieter energy.

From someone who is now in his nineties, the exhibition's nine works are undeniably sensual and sexy. In *Rainbow*, 2003, veins of magenta bleed into a luminous curving arc of bubblegum pink, beneath which gradated layers of green range from pale apple into shocking lime. While these layers jostle on the canvas, they also resonate somewhere in your gut with visceral impact—pleasurable, if not almost a little too intense. A crusted buildup of paint on the right-hand side speaks to Clark's technique: He allows select areas of textured matter to dry before pouring liquid pigments over the surface and then sweeping it with a broom in a controlled but fast gesture. The result is a rainbow-shaped manifestation of pace and power.

His passion for color stems from his days in Paris, where he studied at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière from 1952 to 1953, on a GI stipend. Indeed, in a 2011 interview with his friend the painter Jack Whitten he emphasized: "There's something about France—the angle of the sun or something . . . It gets into your unconscious a little bit." As does Ed Clark.



Ed Clark, *Rainbow*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 58".

— Louisa Elderton