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DAVID SIMPSON

The War Room

September 6 - October 27, 2018

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 6, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is pleased to announce ***The War Room***, an exhibition of new work by seminal Bay Area painter **David Simpson** (b. 1928, lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area).

Over an extraordinary career spanning six decades, Simpson has developed a dynamic creative vision, shaped by boundless curiosity and a desire to expand the limits of painting. From his early, atmospheric striped oil paintings in the 1950s to the “interference” paintings which he has been creating since the 1990s, which appear to change color with each shift of light or perspective, as if responding to the notoriously mercurial Bay Area weather—Simpson is an artist continually engaged with the world around him. As he explains, “The environment changes around you, and you have to respond to it. I’ve seen huge changes in the last fifteen years alone, and I’ve changed with the times.”

The War Room, Haines Gallery’s eighth solo exhibition with Simpson, features a series of never-before-seen paintings, most created after January 20, 2017. In what is perhaps his most pointedly political body of work to date, *The War Room* addresses the alarming state of American politics and our role in global conflict.

Simpson begins his latest works by applying multiple layers of interference pigments, an acrylic-based paint that refract light, causing transformations in tone and color. A painting that appears purple from one angle may read as gold or green from another. While abstract, the resulting paintings have complex, variegated surfaces that seem to resemble clouds of smoke and floating ash, and are evocative of the cacophony and confusion of war and conflict.

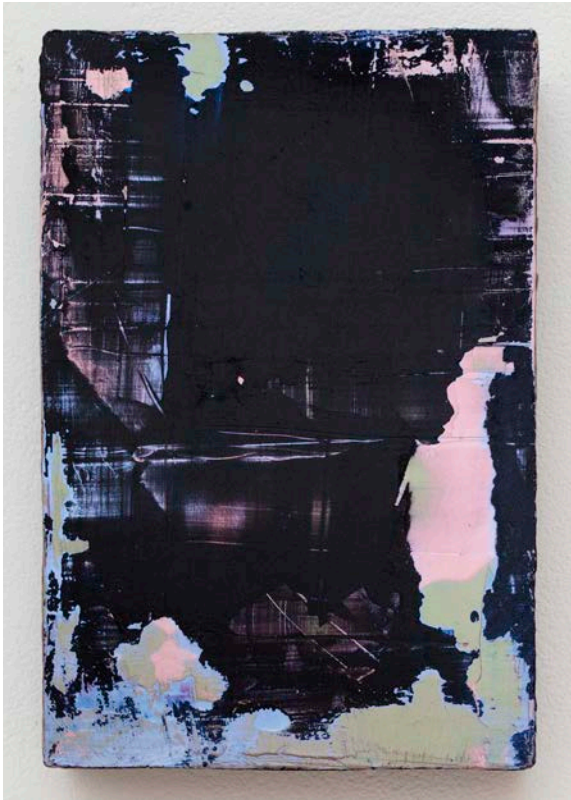
Simpson’s outrage is reflected in the titles chosen for these newest works—typically enigmatic and whimsical, here they take a harsher turn. Some make damning statements about a hawkish approach to foreign policy (*Dogs of War*), the narratives (and agencies) used to justify conflict (*Homeland Security*), and the horrors of war (*Mistakes Were Made* and



Trajectory, 2017
Acrylic on panel
13 x 10 inches



Side view of *Trajectory*



Victory! (Panel 4), 2017
Acrylic on panel
9.5 x 7 inches



Palmyra 3, 2017
Acrylic on panel
18.5 x 11 inches

Floating Ashes). Some make ironic commentary about power (*Victory!* and *Commander in Chief*). Yet others address specific places and events, such as *Mosul* and *Palmyra*, which refer to the systematic destruction of ancient sites and monuments by ISIS in Iraq and Syria respectively.

Now 90, Simpson continues to create new paintings and experiment with the medium's potential. The works on view in *The War Room* reveal an artist who remains engaged and innovative, and demonstrates the ability of non-figurative works to address contemporary current events. Simpson explains, "It seems to me that the times call for it. What's going on now is scary. I don't see how artists can refrain themselves from commenting."

David Simpson received his BFA from the California School of Fine Arts (now SFAI) and MA from San Francisco State College (now SFSU). His work has been showcased in solo and group exhibitions in prestigious institutions including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA. Simpson's work is collected by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; MoMA, NY; SFMOMA, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland; and The Panza Collection, Lugano, Switzerland and Varese, among others.