

Fergus McCaffrey, New York

Marcia Hafif's virtually unknown *Italian Paintings* (1961–1969) are to be shown in New York in the artist's largest exhibition in the United States since PS 1 in 1990.

MARCIA HAFIF: THE ITALIAN PAINTINGS, 1961–1969

April 21–June 25, 2016

Opening Reception: April 21, 6:00–8:00 PM



Following upon the extraordinary reception to Marcia Hafif's *An Extended Gray Scale* (1972–73), at Unlimited as part of Art Basel in June 2015, Fergus McCaffrey is very proud to present *Marcia Hafif: The Italian Paintings, 1961–1969*. This exhibition is the first public opportunity in the United States to assess a body of work vital to an account of American art of the 1960s.

The exhibition will feature almost fifty paintings and works on paper created between 1961 and 1969 in Rome, and it will occupy both floors of the New York gallery space.

Hafif (b. 1929 in Pomona, California) moved to Italy in 1961 for a firsthand encounter with Florentine Renaissance art. However, Rome is where she chose to settle, establish a studio, and make her first mature works among new friends and colleagues such as Carla Accardi, Giulio Turcato, Carmengloria Morales, Franco Angeli, Jannis Kounellis, Pino Pascali, Luciano Fabro, and many more.

In 1964 her first one-person gallery show was presented at Galleria La Salita—together with La Tartaruga, one of the two avant-garde galleries of the early '60s in Rome. This work, her “Pop Minimal” as she has called it in retrospect, had its inception in Los Angeles where she had developed her working method, that of sitting before a canvas or sheet of paper to wait for an image to appear in her mind. What resulted was a bilaterally symmetrical work using hard-edged shapes and often bright colors.

Of all the images I worked with in Rome, the one most significant to me . . . was the hill shape. In painting this shape I used two competing colors, attempting to avoid figure on ground, to equalize the two spaces, but the hill remained dominant. . . . I was placing a positive shape in order to create another positive shape by default, balancing the shapes and balancing the color so that no one prevailed. (Marcia Hafif, “Marcia Hafif in Conversation with Josselyne Naef and Sophie Costes,” in *Marcia Hafif: La période romaine / “Italian Paintings,” 1961–1969*, with an essay by Eric de Chassey [Geneva: MAMCO, 2010; p. 24])

Hafif continued to exhibit at La Salita in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, engaging fully in the life of the city; however, by 1968 she began to feel it was time to return to the United States. She moved back to California in 1969 to enter the new MFA program at the University of California at Irvine, becoming part of the first legendary graduating class in 1971.



When Hafif moved from Rome in 1969, she left her works behind in storage. In 1998 she moved them to France, where several French museums soon expressed interest. Ultimately, Christian Bernard, founder and then director at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, took the majority, and a large group was exhibited there in 2001. In 2010, MAMCO published a catalogue raisonné of the Roman works.

Hafif's first solo exhibition in New York was at Sonnabend Gallery in 1974, and she made four further solo exhibitions there between 1975 and 1981. In the late 1980s she showed with Julian Pretto in New York before beginning a long period of work with galleries in Europe: Dusseldorf, Munich, Paris, Vienna, and Zurich. Hafif's work has been exhibited extensively in museums, notably at PS 1 in 1990; Haus für Konstruktive und Konkrete Kunst, Zurich, 1995; MAMCO, Geneva, 2001; and FRAC Bourgogne, Dijon, 2000.

In the United States Hafif's work was most recently seen in the Hammer Museum Biennial, *Made in L.A. 2014*, and in *Marcia Hafif: From The Inventory* at Laguna Art Museum, 2015. Beyond painting her work is in photography, film, sculpture, on paper, and installations and is represented in collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Hafif divides her time between Laguna Beach, California, and New York City.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Kazuo Shiraga, and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists such as Jack Early, Birgit Jürgensen, Richard Nonas, and Sigmar Polke.

Images:

1. Marcia Hafif, *161.*, October 1967 (red, white/yellow, green). Acrylic on canvas, 55¹/₈ x 55¹/₈ inches (140 x 140 cm)

© Marcia Hafif; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey

2. Installation view of *An Extended Gray Scale*, (1972–73), at Unlimited, Basel, 2015

© Marcia Hafif; Courtesy of Fergus McCaffrey

For press inquiries, please contact: Alexandra von Stumberg McCaffrey

Tel +1 212 988 2200 Email alexandra@fergusmccaffrey.com

Stay connected with the gallery via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with the hashtags #FMMarciaHafif, #FMNewYork, and #FergusMcCaffrey.