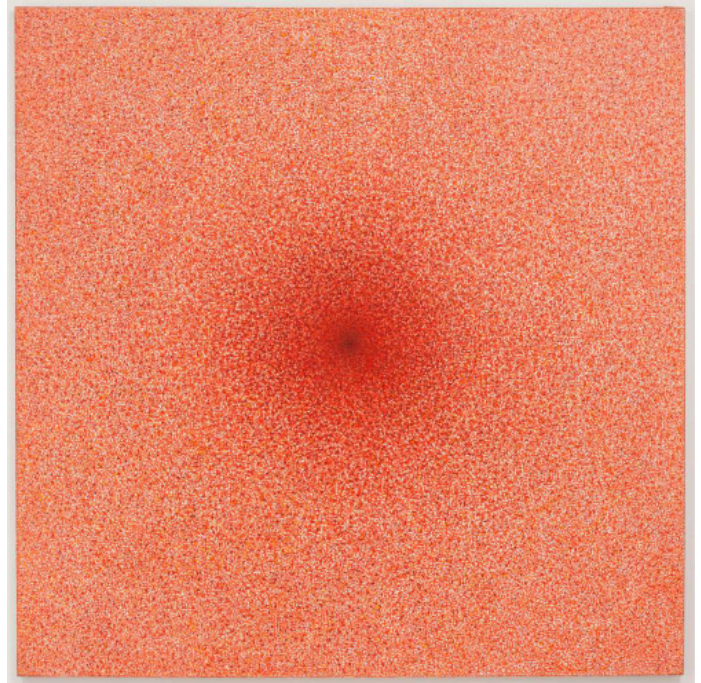


# Richard Pousette-Dart

October 23 – December 19, 2020  
 229 Hamilton Ave  
 Palo Alto



Richard Pousette-Dart, *Radiance Number 8 (Imploding Light Red)*, 1973–74  
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Palo Alto – Pace Gallery is pleased to present *Richard Pousette-Dart*, the first exhibition of the artist’s work at the gallery’s Palo Alto location. The show features sixteen paintings and works on paper, spanning from the late 1960s to works made shortly before his death in 1992. Celebrating the interplay of light and color upon painted and drawn surfaces, these energized abstractions evidence the artist’s intense and enduring interest in exploring the transcendental and symbolic possibilities of abstract painting and drawing. The exhibition will run from October 23 – December 19, 2020.

A founding member of the New York School, Pousette-Dart is one of the now-famous “Irascibles” who signed an open letter in 1950 to the president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art protesting the museum’s conservative views towards modern American painting at that time. His work of the 1940s and 1950s is characterized by colorful, thickly-painted canvases that feature graphically-delineated totemic and ideographic symbols, contributing significantly to the discourse of first-generation Abstract Expressionism. In 1951, Pousette-Dart moved to Rockland County in upstate New York where his approach thereafter gravitated towards the intuitive application of points of color expressed in layered balance across the canvas. Today, he is recognized as a highly-independent innovator among 20th century abstract painters, noting himself that: “The artist must be aware of all schools, isms, creeds, or entanglements which would tend to make him other than himself.”

Works in the present exhibition, such as *Radiance Number 8 (Imploding Light Red)* (1973–74), exemplify the artist’s exceptional abilities to harmonize light, space, and energy across the surfaces of large-scale canvases. Smaller-scale graphite drawings on sensuous hand-made paper, such as *Particle Implosion* (1976), simultaneously demonstrate Pousette-Dart’s keen ability to express cosmological expansiveness through minute, precise, delicate touches of the

hand. The exhibition additionally includes two paintings from the artist's Cosmos series of acrylic-on-board roundels. Here, in concert with other works in the show, Pousette-Dart can be understood to be forwarding something fundamental about the mystical nature of the universe: its openness, its expansiveness, and its unknowability.

The artist once noted that "Within or about every living work of art, or thing of beauty, or fragment of life, there is some strange inner kernel which cannot be reached with explanations, examinations, or definitions... It is this living particle which makes art mystical, unknown, real and experienceable." With that notion in mind, Pousette-Dart's work often defies simple interpretations or points of outside reference. Early associations with prevailing concerns relating to the significance of archetypal imagery give way in later work to broader, more expansive exploration of universal forms and visual possibilities. Ultimately, works such as *Radiance Number 3* (1968–69) which employs layers of oil paint impasto to impart a textured hypnotic surface, masterfully realize such potentials.

**Richard Pousette-Dart** (b. 1916, Saint Paul, Minnesota; d. 1992, New York) was one the youngest artists of the New York School's first generation of Abstract Expressionists. During his career, Pousette-Dart created a lexicon of biomorphic and totemic forms that provided rich visual and symbolic sources that he would explore throughout his long career in a multitude of painterly approaches. He is recognized for his painting, drawing, photography, and sculpture, which are unified by his expressive use of gesture, form, and color. Never embracing action painting but instead pursuing his own aesthetic, Pousette-Dart sought universal significance within his art expressed through abstraction.

Pousette-Dart's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1963, 1974, 1998); The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1997); and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as well as the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy (2007). Recent monographic presentations have been held at The Phillips Collection (2010); the Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern (2013); Philadelphia Museum of Art (2014); The Drawing Center, New York (2015); Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom (2018); and Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine (2018).

**Pace** is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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