

RON GORCHOV
Works from the 1970s
November 10 - December 17, 2016



Set, 1971
Oil on canvas
150 x 149 1/2 x 19 1/4 inches (381h x 379.73w x 48.9d cm)

(New York, NY) This November, Vito Schnabel Projects is pleased to present an exhibition of ten paintings from the 1970s by Ron Gorchov. The artist deploys shaped canvases suggestive of shields, with doubled biomorphic forms in a bilaterally symmetrical format, as in archetypal work like *Brother* (1972) and *Arena* (1977). Gorchov's works descend from experiments in shaped canvases from the 1960s pioneered by artists such as Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Tuttle, David Novros, and Blinky Palermo. The earliest work in this exhibition, *Set* (1971) with its stack of shaped "crown" canvases, clearly demonstrates Gorchov's place among these innovators.

At the same time, Gorchov remained close to leading figures within the established New York School, and was a friend of Mark Rothko; in fact, the first of his shaped canvases was made in what had been Rothko's studio, although he distances himself from the notion that he was ever a later avatar of the New York School: "For one thing, I never wanted to be a second or third generation artist of any kind. Also, I think painting, per se, is an ideal way to criticize the work you already admire because that way you can take the best things in it and try to make your work to be the next consequential step."¹

Rob Storr writes in "Old Master Ron": "Tamper the grid and ease the boundaries of shapes loosely tethered to it and—almost self-protectively—the senses awaken, the imagination comes alive."² The artist's use of the shield as a governing form in his work is exemplary as a sensory and imaginative trope, one that is both literal (the shape) and figurative (the association). As Storr writes, "the pleasure that ensues is at once wholly fulfilling in the moment but poignantly elusive in retrospect—but then true pleasure always is."³

The exhibition will be on view Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6pm, at 360 West 11th Street.

Ron Gorchov was born in Chicago in 1930. He has lived and worked in New York since the 1950s. Gorchov's paintings are included in many prominent collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, the Everson Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Schnabel has worked with Gorchov since 2005, when he presented an overview of the artist's work from the 1970s through the early 2000s. It was the first comprehensive exhibition of Gorchov's work and led to a solo exhibition the following year at MoMA PS1. More recently, Schnabel curated an exhibition of Gorchov's work at Sotheby's S|2 in London in February 2015, and he presented an exhibition of Gorchov's paintings in March 2016 at Vito Schnabel Gallery in St. Moritz, Switzerland.

¹"Ron Gorchov with Robert Storr and Phong Bui." *Brooklyn Rail*. September 2, 2006.
<http://www.brooklynrail.org/2006/09/art/ron-gorchov>.

² Robert Storr, "Old Master Ron: Ron Gorchov at Sotheby's S2," *Sotheby's*, February 4, 2015.
<http://www.sothebys.com/en/news-video/blogs/all-blogs/contemporary/2015/02/ron-gorchov.html>.

³ *Ibid.*