

John Altoon (1925 - 1969)

Known as a prominent figure in the LA art scene in the 1950s and 1960s, John Altoon produced drawings, paintings, and prints of overt satires, personal nightmares and improbable sexual situations. Born in 1925, in Los Angeles, CA, he attended the Otis Art Institute, the Art Center College of Design and the Chouinard Art Institute. Influenced by his encounter with Surrealism in his travels through Europe, Altoon frequently depicted his dreams and fantasies. His renderings are characterised by their misty and ghostly quality, which he achieved by using an airbrush to apply colour.

The Abstract Expressionism Movement largely influenced Altoon's work, although he is best known for his figurative drawings of the 1960s. The visual vocabulary of his practice included idiosyncratic forms loosely based on plants and biological objects. His use of colour and gestural brushwork are similar to the works of Willem de Kooning, an essential member of the Abstract Expressionists.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Altoon was represented by the legendary Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles along with Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, and Edward Keinholz. There, he had three solo exhibitions that led to immediate recognition and acclaim for his abstract expressionist paintings. During those years, Altoon also produced his Ocean Park series, which depicted an area around Venice and Santa Monica beach towns in California. The series included 18 paintings and works on paper and demonstrated the artist's fascination with surrealist automatism and abstract expressionism.

Exhibitions of Altoon's work have been held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Corcoran Gallery, Washington D.C, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, The Baxter Museum, Pasadena, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Selected Artworks



John Altoon

Untitled (ABS-1), 1963

Ink and airbrush on paper

50.8 x 76.2 cm

20 x 30 in

(ALT001)

Selected Exhibitions

- 2022 *Ferus: A Visual Conversation*, JD Malat Gallery, London, UK
- 2018 *Gesture Form Pop Process*, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2016 *John Altoon Works From The Estate*, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 2015 *The West Coast Avant-Garde 1950 - Present*, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

Art Fairs

- 2019 *The Armory Show*, New York, USA
- 2016 *FIAC*, Paris, France
- 2016 *ADAA - The Art Show*, New York, USA
- 2016 *The Armory Show*, New York, USA

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