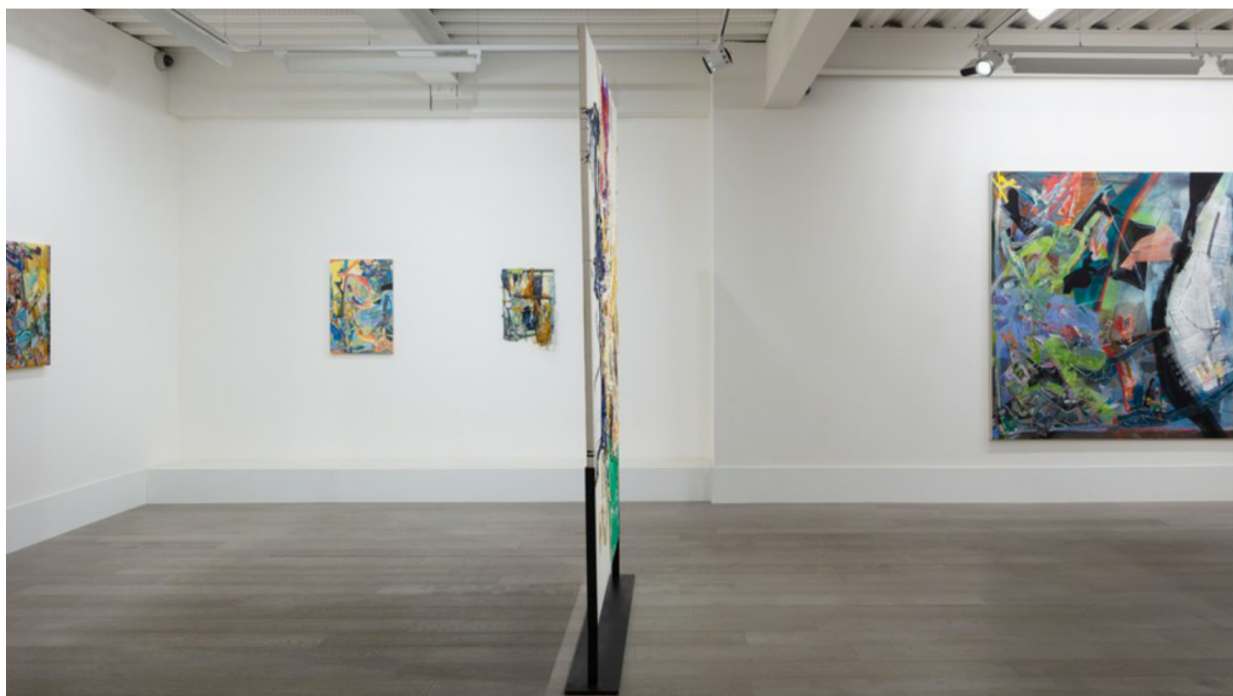


Wall Street International

Iva Gueorguieva, Dona Nelson

16 Mar — 3 May 2018 at the Sophia Contemporary in London, United Kingdom

16 APRIL 2018



Iva Gueorguieva, Dona Nelson. Courtesy of Sophia Contemporary

Sophia Contemporary is pleased to announce *Portal*, the first two-person show of American artists Iva Gueorguieva and Dona Nelson. Gueorguieva and Nelson come from two successive generations of artists whose work is at the forefront of contemporary abstraction in the United States. Through painting and sculpture, both artists grapple with the history of painting, redefining abstraction and challenging the material and conceptual boundaries of their media. The exhibition initiates an intergenerational visual dialogue through fourteen works of which includes Iva Gueorguieva's vibrant acrylic and collage works, alongside Dona Nelson's signature double-sided freestanding paintings.

Portal demonstrates how Gueorguieva and Nelson question the intrinsic flatness of the canvas by exploring the sculptural properties of painting, in particular through the use of collage and the deconstruction of the form through the process of cutting, dyeing, ripping, gluing, and painting on both sides of the canvas. While collage is an integral part of both artists' work, they use it in different ways: Nelson controls the composition of her paintings by erecting physical boundaries on the canvas with gauze soaked in glue while Gueorguieva uses various means to push and move the color as it gets absorbed by the raw canvas.

The artists became friends after Gueorguieva studied under Nelson's supervision at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia in the late 1990s. This exhibition displays the artists' shared interest in pushing the boundaries of their media, as well as the intensive process and labour involved in challenging painting's two-dimensionalality. Portal refers to an opening through which one passes with one's body, alluding to the physicality of Gueorguieva and Nelson's approach to painting.

Often associated throughout art history with the Jackson Pollock myth of the individual male painter expressing his physical prowess on the canvas, Abstract Expressionism has been recently reassessed by casting a new light on female artists who played an important role in the movement such as Lee Krasner or Grace Hartigan. Portal furthers the dialogue about the continued significance of American women abstract pain.

Iva Gueorguieva (b. 1974, Bulgaria) moved to Baltimore in her teenage years. After studying in Baltimore and Philadelphia, Gueorguieva moved to the West Coast in Los Angeles in the mid-2000s where she has been living and working ever since. The fragmentation of space characteristic of her work comes not only from a working-through of cubism, futurism, vortices, and constructivism, but also from her experience of the collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1988. In combining simple elements such as metal scraps, fabric, and stone to create sculptural assemblages, Gueorguieva also draws her inspiration from the Californian landscape where she resides, while also referencing the legacy of American and European movements such as Dada, Arte Provera, and California Assemblage. Her work is included in many public and private collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; University Art Museum | California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA; Art, Design and Architecture Museum at UC Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA; and Pomona College Museum of Art, Claremont, CA.

Dona Nelson (born 1947, USA) is considered one of the most influential contemporary American painters of her generation. Celebrated for her inventive, tactile, and physical approach to her medium, Nelson has spent the past four decades striving to continuously reinvent the definition of contemporary abstraction. Born in Nebraska, Nelson moved to New York in 1967 to participate in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program where she remained until moving to Pennsylvania in 1999. Over the past four decades, the artist has avoided settling on a single 'signature style', preferring constantly to experiment in order to investigate both abstraction and figuration in separate, yet interrelated bodies of work. By creating complex compositions of paint, drips, and marks in a complex web of colours and materials, Nelson's paintings invoke the physicality of Jackson Pollock's Drip Paintings as well as the mark-making and materiality of European works such as Juan Miro's Anti-Paintings and Lucio Fontana's Spatial Concepts. Nelson's work was featured in the 2014 Whitney Biennial and is part of numerous public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida; Perez Art Museum, Miami, Florida and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, among others.



Sophia Contemporary

The gallery exhibits, represents and champions a diverse group of emerging and established artists from the USA, Europe, the Middle East and Asia working in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, video and photography.

[Gallery profile](#)

Location
London, United Kingdom



1. Iva Gueorguieva, Dona Nelson. Courtesy of Sophia Contemporary
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