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**PETER YOUNG *Ellipse Paintings***  
ARTIST'S FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION AT GALLERY WENDI NORRIS  
September 8 – October 29, 2016

**Opening Reception: Thursday, September 8, 6-8PM**

**Peter Young in conversation with Gary Garrels,  
Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting & Sculpture, SFMOMA  
Wednesday, September 28, 6-7PM**



*#36 – 1994, 1994, Acrylic on canvas, 67 3/4 x 80 1/2 inches (172.1 x 204.5 cm)*

July 5, 2016 – San Francisco – For the first exhibition with Peter Young, Gallery Wendi Norris will exhibit nine large paintings on canvas and eight small paintings on paper from the artist's "Ellipse" series. The solo show will encompass the entire gallery with works completed between 1989-2001.

Charisma and exuberance flow through the gestural color swatches in Young's work. In works like *#75-2000* and *#76-2000*, the central color palette is that of primary colors, and in others, such as *#36-1994*, the softer hues of western landscapes appear. For example, in *#36-1994*, the sienna glow of the rocky environs surrounding his Southern Arizona home is prominent, with thinly washed turquoise strokes, suggesting the pristine blue skies of the desert. Though the foreground is made up of flat, thickly colored geometric shapes, the background is comprised of delicate washes of acrylic or vacant white canvas. Such distinct layers produce a surprising sense of depth and motion as the viewer's eye moves from one plane to the other. A dancing effect materializes and the works approach the near figurative, as if in conversation with paintings of an earlier era with a similar emphasis on *joie-de-vivre*, perhaps those of Matisse and his fauvist compatriots.

Young and his work have continuously defied categorization since his early New York years showing with Leo Castelli and Richard Bellamy. He has been described variously as the first post-modernist painter, as well as a minimalist and an abstract surrealist. A sophisticated colorist and man of careful calculation, his paintings can at once conjure a metaphysical, psychedelic and indigenous feel.

Peter Young and many of his iconic paintings and drawings are highlighted in the HBO Documentary Film, *Brillo Box (3¢ off)*, by director Lisanne Skyler. The film, airing in 2017 on HBO, explores the ephemeral nature of art, and follows the path of an Andy Warhol Brillo Box from the Sixties to a 2010 Christie's auction, and how it left the filmmaker's family living room when her father traded it in to acquire a drawing by Peter Young.

#### **ABOUT PETER YOUNG**

**Peter Young** was born in 1940 in Pittsburgh and grew up in Los Angeles. He studied at Pomona College for two years before moving to New York in 1960. From the beginning, his paintings have addressed the rigid formal criteria of minimal art that prevailed in the 1960's. In Young's work, seemingly playful constellations of circles and dots replace restrictive geometric formalism, while colorfulness and pictorial density give way to surprising sensuality and poetic momentum.

The New York art world in the late 1960's was intimate and sectioned into easily identifiable social circles. The group that frequented Max Kansas City during this time was a smaller division of artist clusters that ignited several creative discussions and congregations through regular nightly bar drinking. The club closed in 1981, but was truly the birthplace for Peter Young and his contemporaries, a group of painters that included Dan Christensen, William Pettet, Larry Poons, Brice Marden, David Novoros, Lee Lozano and Ronnie Landfield, among others.

Although Young and his peers formed an artistic collective, each artist went on to pursue very individual stylistic endeavors. Young has long incorporated grids and geometric repetition in his work. Yet, even among these geometric compositions, his prescribed imperfections, dreamlike dialogues, and poetic psychedelics have allowed his work to fall outside of the codes of the purely minimal. Producing paintings that incorporate dots, bands, lines and blots, Young creates work that sometimes borders on abstract expressionism, but primarily is his own individualist and non-conformist style.

By 1969, Young had begun to distance himself from American artistic circles. He travelled to Morocco, Greece and Turkey, lived briefly in Toledo, Spain and in Oaxaca, Mexico, and spent time living with the indigenous Boruca People in Costa Rica. Following his travels, he settled in southern Arizona from where he makes frequent trips to Mexico. Despite distancing himself from the American art scene for several years, Young has continued to show in many significant exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad.

Following his first two solo exhibitions in 1967 and 1970 at the Noah Goldowsky Galley, Young then exhibited at Richard Bellamy's Oil & Steel Gallery in Tribeca in 1984. Richard Bellamy also ran The Green Gallery, which opened in 1960 and showed works by many prominent artists, such as Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Donald Judd, and James Rosenquist. Through Bellamy's interest in Young's work, it came to the attention of then P.S.1 Director, Alanna Heiss, and in 2007 the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center dedicated a comprehensive survey exhibition to the artist's work, accompanied by a monograph, focusing on the period between 1963 - 1980.

His work has been included in exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson, Arizona; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Guggenheim, New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D.C.; as well as the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Tate St. Ives, United Kingdom; Rolf Ricke, Cologne; and Documenta 5, Kassel, Germany. Peter Young's work is featured in collections, including the Allen Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio; the American University, Washington D.C.; the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Australia; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago;

The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Neuberger Museum, Purchase College, New York; Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita; University of Texas, Austin; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

**ABOUT GALLERY WENDI NORRIS**

Gallery Wendi Norris presents a contemporary and modern program that showcases artists working over many geographic locations and in a wide array of media. Gallery Wendi Norris is active locally as well as internationally, working with collectors and museums alike in both primary and secondary markets. Founded with an emphasis on scholarship and education, the gallery produces researched exhibition catalogues, sponsors artist talks, hosts visiting academics, and engages in local public art projects, among other initiatives. Learn more at [gallerywendinorris.com](http://gallerywendinorris.com).

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