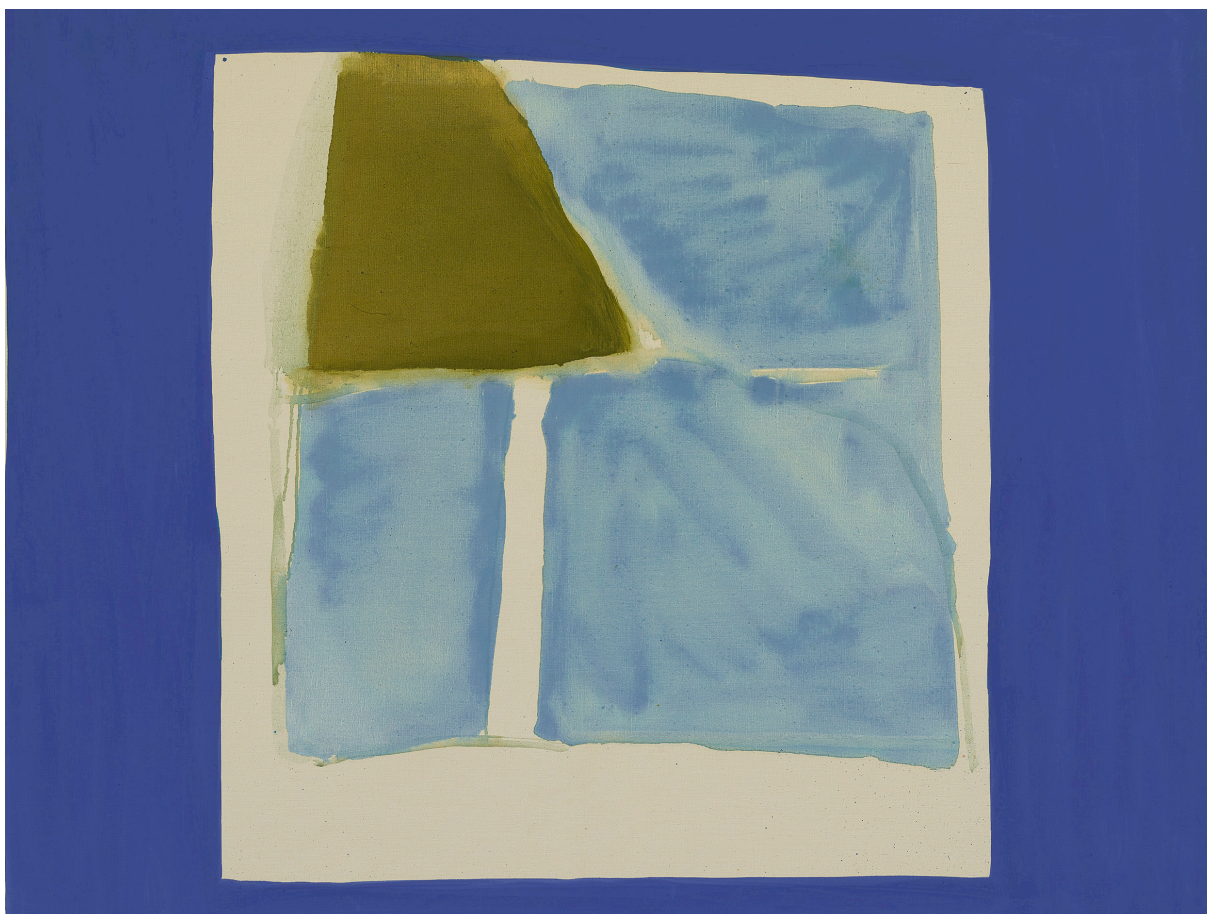


Timothy Taylor



James Bishop, *Hours* (detail), 1963. Oil on canvas, 50 × 51 ½ in. (127 × 130.8 cm) © James Bishop

‘To continue painting’: James Bishop and New York

15 January — 28 February 2026
74 Leonard Street, New York

Timothy Taylor is pleased to present ‘*To continue painting*’: *James Bishop and New York*, an exhibition of paintings by James Bishop (1927–2021), curated by art historian Molly Warnock. On view in New York from 15 January through 28 February, the exhibition brings together eight paintings and eleven works on paper spanning ca. 1960 to 1987, a period of notable productivity, invention, and recognition for the artist. Presented only blocks from Bishop’s former Lispenard Street studio, the exhibition’s title is drawn from a grant application the artist submitted to the National Endowment of the Arts in 1973, in which he requested support, simply, “to continue painting.”

This is the artist’s first solo presentation in New York in more than a decade. In conjunction with the exhibition, Warnock will be in conversation at the gallery with painters Amy Sillman and David Reed on 28 January.

Bishop carved his own path among the American and European postwar movements with subtle abstractions that privilege expression as much as process and materiality. The Missouri-born painter, who moved to Paris in 1958 and then spent most of his life in Blévy, France, considered himself to be “an Abstract Expressionist of the quieter branch.” The earliest works on canvas in this exhibition, *Untitled* (1961–62) and *Hours* (1963), reveal the artist’s relationship to developments in painting in the States. Though his work resonates with aspects of Colour Field painting, unlike those contemporaries, he worked on primed canvas such that colour didn’t soak into the fabric; his pigment remained explicitly on the surface as a skin, marked by evidence of the artist’s hand and brush. These traces likewise distance the artist from the Minimalists, though there is a clear reductivism in his approach. *Hours*, in particular, is a pivotal work that foregrounds the emergent method and compositional interests that would characterise Bishop’s output moving forward.

Bishop’s process involved tilting a stretched and pencilled canvas, on the studio floor, to distribute diluted oil paint, curbing the flows of pigment such that they would be contained within the limits of his pre-sketched geometries. The process invited chance while also asserting control and emphasised the conditions of the support—its dimensions, texture, and flatness. In *Hours*, this procedure resulted in a central passage of blue and green that approximates a gridded square. Framing this form is an uneven band of rich cerulean that echoes the proportions of the canvas.

These elements recur across the six larger paintings on view, which assume the human-scaled 77 x 77-inch square format the artist would adopt as his standard between 1967 and 1986. Fields of earthy white, umber, olive, and grey hues are intersected by elusive, modulating lines. Recalling doors, ladders, and scaffolding (the poet John Ashbery described Bishop’s paintings as “half architecture, half air”), these architectonic divisions of the pictorial space are enlivened by Bishop’s paint handling. Slight irregularities and asymmetries return the viewer to the inconstant nature of the painting body. Warnock, who has published extensively on the artist, writes, “It is through such displacements that the distinctive expressiveness of Bishop’s paintings emerges.”

Iteration and variation were also central themes for the artist, as evidenced by the eleven exhibited works on paper, which occupy more intimate formats. Even as he worked on paper (and as acrylics became popular among his peers), Bishop only used oil paints, valuing their translucency and richness. Many of these works play with the same geometric compositional elements, subtly ushering them between background and foreground, veiling or exposing them. In each version, Bishop’s rearrangements generate surprising tensions between whole and part. Warnock, again, keenly identifies this quality: “Bishop’s repetition is less a matter of one thing after another than of one thing emerging where it touches another, and so already bound up with that other: It is more intimate than seriality.”

Luminous and delicate, these works offer a nuanced insight into a painter who quietly, diligently pursued a practise that explored, through repetition and variation, dynamics of ambiguity and incongruity within discrete structures.

About the Artist

James Bishop (b. 1927, Neosho, Missouri; d. 2021, Blévy, France) studied painting at Washington University in St. Louis and Black Mountain College, as well as art history at Columbia University under Meyer Shapiro, before settling in France. In 1966, following a succession of solo presentations in Paris and Brussels and favourable reviews by the American critic Annette Michelson, among others, he garnered acclaim with individual exhibitions at Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, and Fischbach Gallery, New York, galleries with whom he would have multiple shows over the next decade. His work has been

the subject of numerous solo exhibitions since, including at the Clocktower, New York (1973); Rosa Esman Gallery, New York (1974); Galleria D'Alessandro-Ferranti, Roma (1975); Galerie Annemarie Verna, Zurich (1976, 1979, 1981, 1986, 2006, 2008, 2017); Galerie Françoise Lambert, Milano (1977); Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, Munich (1977); Droll/Kolbert Gallery, New York (1979); Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco (1981); Simon/Neuman Gallery, New York (1987); Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich (2004); Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2007); Art Institute of Chicago (2008); and David Zwirner, New York (2014). In 1993, Bishop's work was the subject of a retrospective organised at Kunstmuseum Winterthur that travelled to Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, and Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster. His work resides in collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek; Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; and Kunsthaus Zurich.

About Molly Warnock

Molly Warnock is a widely published art historian and critic. Her most recent essay on James Bishop's painting, entitled "Portraits of No One: Bishop, Rembrandt, Genet," will appear in *Journal of Contemporary Painting* and (in French translation) in the *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* in winter 2025–26. The author of the monographs *Simon Hantaï and the Reserves of Painting* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020) and *Penser la Peinture. Simon Hantaï* (Gallimard, 2012), she has also written on modern and contemporary art for, among other journals, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Tate Papers*, and *nonsite*, and for numerous edited volumes and exhibition catalogues. Recent editorial projects include four volumes for the bilingual French-English *Transatlantique* collection (ER Publishing), on Martin Barré, Simon Hantaï, James Bishop, and Michel Parmentier. At Timothy Taylor, New York, she previously curated *Simon Hantaï: Unfolding* (2024). Since 2022, she is Director of the Clyfford Still Catalogue Raisonné Project at the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver, Colorado.

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