

9 Things Ed Moses Would Want Us to Know for His 90th Birthday



Ed Moses.
Photo: Courtesy of Alan Shaffer for William Turner Gallery.

This Saturday, April 9, legendary West Coast artist Ed Moses turns 90 years old. His illustrious career as an abstract painter started with a group exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in the 1950s, while working as a master of fine arts candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles.

However, it would be a 1973 solo show in New York City that cements Moses in the modern art historical cannon, thanks to critic Clement Greenberg who characterized him as "a player." More than four decades later, Moses is still creating work.

To celebrate his 90th birthday, William Turner Gallery in sunny Santa Monica is hosting an exciting survey of his paintings. The show, titled "Moses@90," opens

Thomas, Amanda. "9 Things Ed Moses Would Want Us to Know for His 90th Birthday," artnet news. April 9, 2016

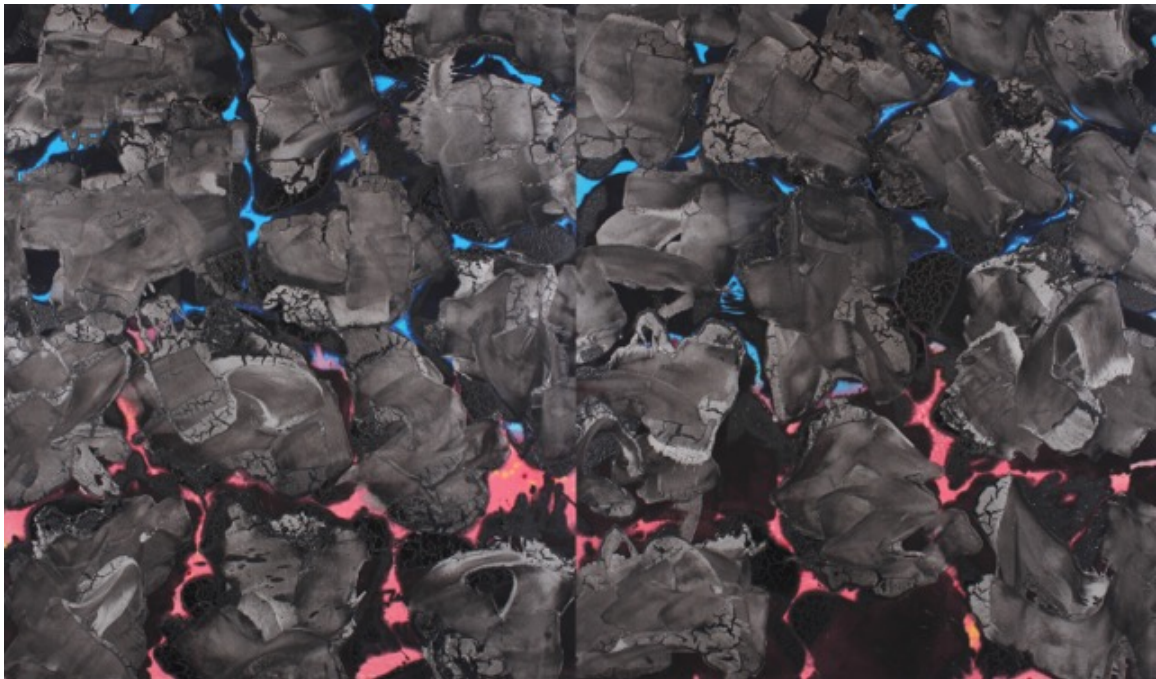
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on April 30 and will review Moses's 60-year career. On view will be works that span his earliest graphite drawings from the 1960s to his cross hatch screen paintings and gestural paintings in the 1990s. We'll also get a chance to see his more recent mirror paintings.

Moses's ideas on the art world and its players stem from his devout and long-standing practice of Buddhism. To Moses, artists are born, not taught, and he believes that artists are shamans, equating his own art practice to ancient traditional cave paintings.

Below, we rounded up nine quotes by Moses on spirituality, life, and what it means to be an artist.



Ed Moses, *Bronco* (2002)
Photo: Courtesy of William Turner Gallery.

1. On freedom:

"The rational mind constantly wants to be in charge. The other parts want to fly. My painting is the encounter between the mind's necessity for control and its yearning to fly, to be free from our ever-confining skull."

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2. On Buddhism:

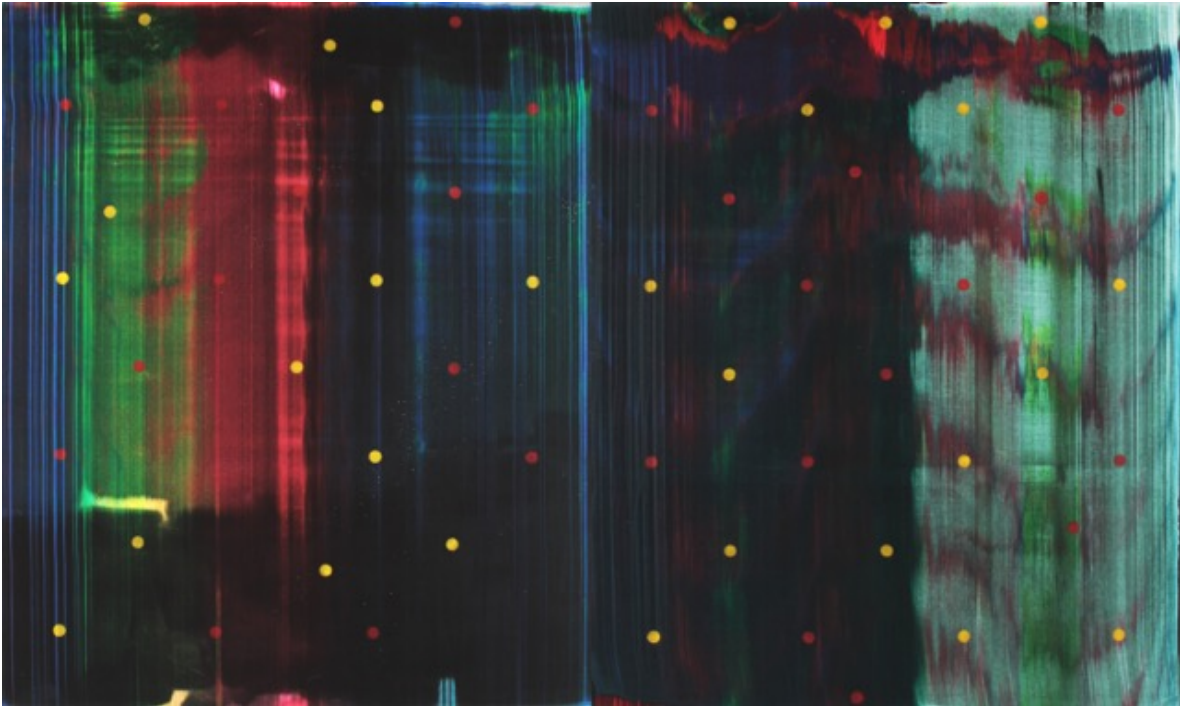
"I've been student of Buddhism since 1960. And of course it interfaces how I behave, how I think, how I perceive."

3. On inspiration:

"I'm never inspired. I'm obsessed. And I look forward every day to paint."

4. On the Ferus Gallery:

"This group of artists that hung out at Ferus Gallery, we all had an arrogance that we were the best, and all of the other artists in this town were on an old boat, and they had better get on a fast plane with us. We outshone them all; we outgrew them all."



Ed Moses, *Sato* (2008)

Image Courtesy of William Turner Gallery

5. On destroying his paintings:

"When they light up, I keep them. And if they don't light up, I don't want them."

6. On when he started painting:

"Are you a decorator? Are you an artist? What are you? I said, I'm not any of those things. I do what I do in response to my awareness of living."

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7. On artists:

"I'm against professional artist. I'm against career artist. I'm against the idea of doing it for money. So everybody is training in these art schools and everyone is getting this money. We need to enrich our culture we don't need to make professional artist."

8. On painting:

"I don't paint for myself. I'm against the idea of expressing myself, being creative, that's another word I really hate. I paint for you all. What I do is for these paintings to be seen, and they are like metaphors of life. I feel that a real person that does this taps into his existence."

9. On being a shaman:

"My thought is that the artist functions in a tribal context, that he is the shaman. When the urban life came in, tribes no longer existed ... but there was still a genetic core of shamans, of magic men, broken loose and genetically floating around. And when they had this gene, they shook the rattles. The shamans were the interpreters of the unknown, they reacted to the unknown with symbols and objects and wall painting. And that's where it all came from. That's where I came from, but when you're a young man you don't know that."



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