MOUSSE

Bob Smith “From Space Countries Have No Borders” at Emanuela Campoli, Paris



Bob Smith, *TIZNIT MOROCCO*, 1980, Bob Smith “From Space Countries Have No Borders” at Emanuela Campoli, Paris, 2024. Courtesy: the Estate of Bob Smith and Emanuela Campoli, Paris / Milan. Photo: Max C Lee

This show was selected as part of Paris Oomph—a curated roundup of the best contemporary art exhibitions and events held by galleries, museums, and institutions in town during Art Basel Paris, October 2024.

Bob Smith was born in Springfield, Mass. in 1944 and died in Miami in 1990 after being diagnosed with AIDS. A graduate in graphics from the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, he was awarded a Charles H. Whitman traveling scholarship by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1969. He traveled to Europe, deciding to settle in Madrid then Morocco, where he learned woodcraft and silver inlay. Smith later returned to Madrid where work was brought to the public by Galeria Vandrès, a prominent avant-garde art gallery. Between 1971 and 1977, Smith was regularly exhibited across Europe, including the 1973 Biennale de Paris.

In 1977, Bob Smith settled in New York City. Smith became friends with artists such as Michel Auder, Alice Neel, Gregory Corso, Gary Indiana, Larry Rivers, Jack Waters and composer Meredith Monk. He collaborated on projects with many of these artists, particularly avant-garde choreographer and dancer Blondell Cummings, for whom he did the stage design and costumes for Basic Strategies No. V. Smith was also a visual artist for the Cultural Council Foundation, where he taught art to seniors and mentally handicapped adults. In 1982, Smith traveled to Denmark on an Alumni Travelling Scholarship from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In 1988, he participated in a residency at the Mac-Dowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

By the late eighties, Smith moved to Miami. During this time, Smith was battling debilitating symptoms of AIDS but found joy in creating art and being active in various art collectives and organizations. Smith passed away in Miami, Florida in 1990.

Unlike some of his contemporaries, travel was essential to his life and practice. Smith's approach to travel differs from any colonial or voyeuristic depiction of the places he has inhabited and experienced. Instead, a deep connection with the landscapes and the people he has encountered has infused his works and subjects, from archeology to American imperialism, to people's fantasies and dreams. "From Space Countries Have no Borders" features a group of paintings, drawings and "walled constructions" that explore these mirroring sides of Smith's sensibility, from down to earth political issues to the imaginative, oneiric realm of individuals.

at Emanuela Campoli, Paris
until December 21, 2024