

PRESS RELEASE**JEFFERY CAMP RA - *Playground***
Sixty Years of Painting

1 July – 5 August 2016

[View Catalogue with introduction by AA Gill on-line](#)*Fisherman & Seagulls* – 1976, oil on board, 33 x 84 cm

In the Catalogue introduction of the exhibition AA Gill writes “Jeffery has spent a life being an artist, not just a man who made pictures, but one who has been immersed in the craft and the spirit and the great ghostly legion of artists. They were never dead to him, or to us. They all lived in the marks they made. They surrounded, cajoled, commended, encouraged, and occasionally jogged your hand. Being an artist was the highest calling and you can see in his work in every tender, thoughtful, heartfelt stroke, in every image the litany of his craft and calling. They are leaves from the Atlas of what makes the most beguiling and assiduous body of an artist.”

This exhibition is not so much a retrospective but more of a spontaneous celebration: an attempt to expand our understanding of Jeffery Camp, now in his 94th year, by bringing together a selection of his paintings, old and new, in a spirit of salutation. Nothing is borrowed. Everything has been selected from his home-cum-studio in London; a treasure trove of new work and overlooked and forgotten gems from as far back as the late 50s.

Small fugitive paintings will hang beside grand compositions in a selection that does not claim to be comprehensive, rather it is seen as a call to all those who care about painting to affirm Jeffery Camp as an important and continuing inspiration. Each work has been scrutinised and reappraised by Jeffery himself so what we see is a ‘flashback’ of things that remain meaningful to him: a journey that takes in the exuberant *be-bop-a-lulu* dancers of the 50s, the windswept coastline of Suffolk from the 60s, the mesmeric and often unnerving headland of Beachy Head from the 70s to the urban lyricism of the Thames-side paintings of the 90s, all the way to the present day. Stylistic changes have taken their course but there is throughout a consistency of vision – a vision that takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary: youthful, joyous, dizzying and dreamlike. It is a world with a heightened sense of reality that acts as an antidote and an escape from the mundanity of the everyday.

Jeffery Camp’s ingenuity is undeniable. Years of dedicated study of every aspect of painting has given him the liberty to invent at will. He plays with perception and language and when the conventional orthogonal frame is too limiting the diamond, the triangle, the roundel and in recent years the random, multi faceted boards are added to the repertoire. Light-hearted at times and certainly a master of visual ironies, Jeffery Camp involves us emotionally as well as intelligently in things that matter.

Born in Suffolk in 1923, Camp studied first at Lowestoft and Ipswich Schools of Art before moving to Edinburgh College of Art. He is also an author of distinction, whose immensely popular books *DRAW* (1981) and *PAINT* (1996), have taken home-based art instruction to new heights and in 2010 he co-published *ALMANAC* with Art Space Gallery and the Royal Academy.