

# WADDINGTON CUSTOT

## Richard Höglund: Four Quartets

28 June – 23 September 2023

Private view: 27 June 2023, 6-8pm



This summer, Waddington Custot presents work by France-based American painter Richard Höglund (b.1982, Sumter, South Carolina), who investigates what it means to paint. Each of his series of works is developed after a long process of research and contemplation, compounding ideas from the worlds of philosophy, architecture and literature, whilst also investigating the significance of traditional media, such as drawing and painting, and their fundamental artistic method.

The paintings selected for the exhibition are from Höglund's *Four Quartets* series, which are dense with historical references: from geometric principles of ancient Egypt to those of Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier; from Rembrandt to Reinhardt, who were celebrated for creating luminosity out of darkness within their paintings. The most direct reference made by these works is to the iconic *Homage to the Square* series by German-born artist and educator Josef Albers, from which the paintings take their compositional structure. *"I am directly addressing Albers' work as an artist, but also as a teacher. In this moment of generative, "teachable" AI, what is copying, what is learning, and what is profoundly, inimitably human? What of subtlety, of the tiny shifts that create the rifts wherein nests the unprogrammable mystery of the creative spirit?"*

In Höglund's series, combinations of three or four concentric squares are outlined in goldpoint, creating a framework into which dark pigments are pressed into a prepared ground. At first sight, the paintings appear almost black, however as the viewer moves around the work, each individual square emerges, defining itself from the others by the way light is absorbed or reflected within the surface. The ground of the painting is built up using indigo, basalt, marble and bone: materials selected for their optical properties and each imbued with symbolic meaning for the artist, as he explains: *"I think of indigo as the deep, whether the cosmos or the sea. I think of bone dust as the eventuality of the body, and marble dust as the eventuality of what we make. Basalt is my rock of the North and is reminiscent of voyages I would undertake in a mad hunt for a lost Burkean sublime."*

In some instances, indigo is combined with dioxazine, copper or iron to create an iridescent effect, causing the squares to glow outwards, hovering ahead of the painting surface. The squares sit in an inverted arrangement to those of Albers' paintings; they are no longer grounded, but appear to resist gravity, accentuating the transcendental quality in each work. Albers explored the interaction of colour in his

paintings, which raised questions about perception that Höglund pursues in a study of light itself: “*These paintings come alive in low, natural light as it changes by the hour and the season. They are perhaps at their best at dawn, or at twilight, when the eye needs time to adjust. A painting is not an image. A painting requires your presence, light and time; time for looking and for apparitions to come and go with your thoughts.*”

The title of the series ‘*Four Quartets*’ refers to T.S Eliot’s eponymous collection of four poems, of which one of the predominant motifs is time. Höglund’s *Four Quartets*, rich with historical references, similarly contemplate ideas of time, beauty and eternity.

*“Painting is such a silly activity really. We wish to mirror nature but can never match it in its complexity. This failure endows painting with value as a distinctly human endeavour.”*

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Richard Höglund: *Four Quartets* will be shown alongside works by Egyptian-born artist Yves Dana. Dana shares with Höglund a starting point for his work in Ancient Egyptian forms, using Basalt, limestone, diabase and serpentine to create textural and deceptively simple sculptures.

### Credit Line

Richard Höglund: *Four Quartets* is at Waddington Custot from 28 June 2023–23 September 2023.  
waddingtoncustot.com

### About Richard Höglund

Richard Höglund (b.1982, Sumter, South Carolina) studied art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and semiology at MIT in Boston, USA. He holds an MFA (DNSEP, 2008) obtained at the Haute école des arts du Rhin in Strasbourg, France. In 2013, Höglund was selected by Tacita Dean to participate in her workshop at the Fundación Botín in Santander. Höglund was awarded the Prix Jeune Création, Paris, France (2006) and has participated in several residency programs, including Hóll, the Birgir Andrésón Residency, Seyðisfjörður, Iceland (2015); Villa Ruffieux, Sierre, Switzerland (2013), Villa Bernasconi, Geneva, Switzerland (2010), Moly Sabata, Sablons, France (2010); and the Fountainhead Residency, Miami, USA (2009). Today Höglund lives and works in France.

### About Waddington Custot

Waddington Custot was formed through the partnership of French art dealer Stephane Custot and long-time London art dealer Leslie Waddington, in 2010. Located in Cork Street since 1958, formerly as Waddington Galleries, the gallery has a rich heritage and an international reputation for quality and expertise in works by modern and contemporary masters, with a particular focus on monumental sculpture.

The gallery has cemented its reputation over several decades for high quality and well-researched exhibitions of significant artists operating in the mid-twentieth century and beyond. Today, Waddington Custot represents heavyweight contemporary and modern artists and their estates including Peter Blake, David Annesley, Patrick Caulfield, Allan D’Arcangelo, Ian Davenport, Barry Flanagan, Robert Indiana, Landon Metz, Pablo Reinoso, Fabienne Verdier and Bernar Venet. The inventory includes works by important modern European artists including Josef Albers, Jean Dubuffet, Hans Hartung, Fausto Melotti, Pierre Soulages, Antoni Tàpies and Maria Helena Vieira da Silva.

### Gallery Contact

Marcus Crofton | marcus@waddingtoncustot.com | +44 (0) 20 7851 2200  
Florence Ritter | florence@waddingtoncustot.com | +44 (0) 20 7851 2200

### Exhibition Listing Details

Exhibition: Richard Höglund: *Four Quartets*  
Address: Waddington Custot, 11 Cork Street, London W1S 3LT  
Dates: 28 June – 23 September 2023  
Opening Times: Monday to Friday, 10am–6pm; Saturday: 11am–6pm  
Admission: Free  
Travel: Piccadilly, Green Park or Bond Street