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PRESS RELEASE:

Newport Street Gallery to open next week with John Hoyland solo exhibition

A solo exhibition of work by John Hoyland (1934–2011) – one of Britain’s leading abstract painters – will inaugurate Damien Hirst’s Newport Street Gallery, which opens in Vauxhall, south London on 8th October 2015.

‘Power Stations’ presents over thirty of Hoyland’s large-scale paintings, dating from 1964 to 1982, drawn from Hirst’s collection. Spanning a pivotal period in the artist’s career, the works will be displayed throughout all six of the gallery’s exhibition spaces until 3rd April 2016. Entry to the gallery is free of charge.

Renowned for his bold and intuitive use of colour, form, line and space, Hoyland emerged at the forefront of the abstract movement in Britain in the early 1960s, and remained an energetic and innovative force within the field, until his death in 2011.

‘Power Stations’ will be the first major exhibition devoted to the artist since a retrospective of his work at Tate St Ives in 2006. Hoyland, who was elected to the Royal Academy in 1991, has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery (1967), the Serpentine Gallery (1979) and the Royal Academy of Arts, London (1999).

The paintings featured in ‘Power Stations’ are presented according to loose chronological groups, through which the evolution of Hoyland’s practice, and the development of the formal techniques and motifs he employed, are made evident. Art critic Mel Gooding identified 1964 – the date of the earliest paintings in the exhibition – as the moment Hoyland broke away from “playfully cerebral optical ambiguities”, and launched his “powerful assertion of the painting itself as a complex object”. On view in Newport Street’s lower galleries, the works dating from 1964 to the late ‘60s, characteristically feature abutting quasi-geometric shapes that float freely from the canvas edge. These forms emerge from dramatic walls of colour, washes of acrylic in hues of greens and reds that supersede and interact with each other on the canvas surface.

The upper galleries chart Hoyland’s subsequent experimentation with paint texture and opacity, freer forms, brush strokes and the palette knife. Powerfully demonstrating the increasing sense of expressive energy in Hoyland’s work, the canvases dating from the early 70s illustrate a shift in the artist’s palette from the strong, oppositional colours used

previously, to more muted, fleshy, pink and pastel tones. The irregular diamonds, rhomboids and triangles that feature in the works of 1979 to '82 are indicative of Hoyland's increasing interest in the 'dynamic of the diagonal'. More deliberately evocative than his earlier work, the kinetic energy invoked by these fractured sequences of colour are suggestive of the artist's passion for the structures of natural phenomena and the unpredictable free forms of jazz and blues music.

Hirst has been an admirer of Hoyland's work since he first encountered it in Leeds Art Gallery as a student. He has described Hoyland as: "an artist who was never afraid to push the boundaries. His paintings always feel like a massive celebration of life to me." On the choice of Hoyland for Newport Street's inaugural exhibition, Hirst commented in an interview with Tim Marlow, Director of Artistic Programmes, Royal Academy of Arts, London: "The space will set the paintings off brilliantly and the paintings will set the space off brilliantly."

Despite consistently maintaining that non-figurative imagery embodied "the potential for the most advanced depth of feeling and meaning", Hoyland disliked the label of 'abstract artist', asserting that its implications of premeditated action were not applicable to his working methods. Describing the instinctive nature of his process, he asserted that painting instead provided a means of "measuring one's physical and emotional responses". Simultaneously monumental and poetic, the works presented in the exhibition are, above all, sensory experiences. Serving as an overdue affirmation of Hoyland's significance within the field of abstraction, they provide fascinating insights into the artist's practice, and through it, the object of painting itself.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue that includes a foreword by Tate director, Nicholas Serota, written to coincide with Newport Street's opening, as well as a text by art historian and critic, Barry Schwabsky, a re-published essay by the late writer Gordon Burn, and a 2009 conversation between Hoyland and Damien Hirst.

Notes to editors

'Power Stations' is curated by Damien Hirst.

Newport Street Gallery opens in Vauxhall, south London, on 8 October. The gallery will present single artist or group exhibitions featuring work from Damien Hirst's extensive collection of art.

Spanning five buildings, Newport Street Gallery is the realisation of Hirst's long-term ambition to share his extensive collection of art – which includes over 3,000 works – with the public. Entry to the gallery will be free.

John Hoyland (1934-2011) was born in Sheffield and studied at the Royal Academy Schools, London, where he completed his diploma in 1960. The same year, he appeared in the pioneering Situation exhibition at the RBA Galleries, London, the first show to present large-scale abstract paintings by British artists. In 1964 he featured in Bryan Robertson's group show, The New Generation, at the Whitechapel Gallery, and three years later he was the subject of a large-scale exhibition at the same gallery. In 1969, Hoyland represented Britain in the São Paulo Biennale with Anthony Caro. From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, Hoyland split his time between New York, London and Wiltshire and in 1979, the Serpentine Gallery presented a survey of his latest work. A long-standing and outspoken Royal Academician, he was appointed Professor of

Painting at the Royal Academy Schools in 1999 and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Sheffield Hallam University in 2000. Later in his career, retrospectives of his work were held at the Royal Academy (1999), the Graves Art Gallery in Sheffield (2001) and Tate St Ives (2006). In 2006 he was the subject of a major monograph by the critic Mel Gooding (published by Thames & Hudson).

**John Hoyland: Power Stations
Paintings 1964–1982**
8th October 2015 – 3rd April 2016

Newport Street Gallery
Newport Street
London
SE11 6AJ

Opening times:
Tuesday – Sunday
10am – 6pm

Free entry

www.newportstreetgallery.com
<http://www.johnhoyland.com>

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