

PHILLIPS X

PRESS RELEASE

PHILLIPSX PRESENTS *DISSECTING THE SQUARE. COLOURS AND BLACK BY ALEXANDER JAMES*

A Selling Exhibition of New Works by British Multimedia Artist Alexander James, Reimagining One of Abstraction's Most Enduring Forms

On View at Phillips' Asia Headquarters in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District from 27 April – 31 May



Alexander James
Blue Pulse, 2025
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Hong Kong – 15 April 2026 – [PhillipsX](#), the selling exhibition platform operated by Phillips' global Private Sales team, is proud to present [Dissecting the Square. Colours and Black by Alexander James](#). Showcasing a major new body of work, the selling exhibition marks a significant moment for the British-born multimedia artist, whose practice spans painting, sculpture, video, and installation. A graduate of Camberwell College of Arts in London, James has exhibited internationally in London, Paris, and New York, and is rapidly establishing himself as one of the most compelling voices of his generation.

The exhibition's title originates from a formative moment in James's studio. Recalling an early morning when sunlight sharply divided an empty canvas, James describes how the light was "literally dissecting the square." This moment became the conceptual starting point for the series, framing the canvas as both a physical structure and a symbolic boundary.

Dissecting the Square. Colours and Black by Alexander James brings together a new series of works in which the act of dissecting the square plays a pivotal role, both formally and conceptually. At the core of James's practice is an ongoing exploration of the square as a site of fragmentation, repetition, structure, and possibility.

Alexander James, said: "I often divide the surface of the canvas into four equal quadrants, each functioning as an individual artwork or collectively forming a unified composition. This process allows me to explore ideas of fragmentation, repetition, and cohesion, while also challenging the viewer's perception of the whole versus the part."

The square is not simply a compositional device, but the central language through which James explores the tension between control and freedom. The paintings emerge through a process that begins with writing, notation, and loose sketches before moving into a highly intuitive, expressive engagement with the canvas.

James added, "Before the painting process starts, it usually entails me writing and jotting down all these little notes." This emphasis on process-driven spontaneity remains central to his work. Describing painting as "a marathon of lots of little sprints," James moves between instinctive mark-making, moments of distance and reflection, and repeated re-entry into the painted surface.



Alexander James

Alexander James's new body of work is grounded in a rich art-historical lineage, engaging with artists who have explored, challenged, and redefined the square as one of abstraction's most enduring forms. His practice enters a conceptual dialogue with the legacies of Josef Albers, Richard Diebenkorn, and Sean Scully, among others, while remaining distinctly his own.



Alexander James
In a Place of Portrait, 2026
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Alexander James
Summit of Souls, 2026
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Alexander James
Interesting Fates, 2026
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm

The influence of Josef Albers' *Homage to the Square* series is especially resonant. Like Albers, James uses the square as a formal structure through which perception is destabilized and reassembled. Yet where Albers explored chromatic relationships with rigorous restraint, James expands the form into expressive, psychologically charged compositions.

While rooted in abstraction, James's paintings are equally informed by portraiture and the fragmented presence of the human figure. Drawing from personal archives, recorded memories, and everyday observations, faces and

bodily forms emerge as psychological traces rather than literal representations. Often obscured or incomplete, these figures reflect the artist's enduring interest in memory, perception, and the instability of image-making, existing in tension with the geometric structure of the square.

James's work also resonates with the emotional architecture of Mark Rothko, the modular rigor of Donald Judd, the expanded geometries of Frank Stella, and the radical formal propositions of Kazimir Malevich. Echoes of Sean Scully's rhythmic bands and structural blocks can likewise be felt in James's exploration of balance, structure, and emotional resonance, as he pushes the square beyond a static form into something dynamic, psychological, and deeply contemporary.



Alexander James
Slowly Dissolving, 2025
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm



Alexander James
Between Us The Fog, 2025
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 100 x 100 cm

“In an era where abstraction continues to evolve, Alexander James stands out as one of the most compelling young voices redefining the square today. With *Dissecting the Square. Colours and Black* by Alexander James, he brings renewed vitality to one of art history's most enduring forms, infusing it with a raw, contemporary energy shaped by urban life, memory, and psychological depth. This exhibition not only honours abstraction's rich past but powerfully signals its vibrant future, offering collectors works of genuine intellectual depth and lasting appeal.” said **Jonathan Crockett, Chairman, Asia, Phillips**.



Alexander James in his London studio, 2025

Drawing on the formal legacies of these art-historical figures, James honors the past while extending its language into the present. His paintings carry the rhythm, pressure, and psychological intensity of contemporary urban life—particularly the pace and dissonance of London—while remaining firmly rooted in abstraction's ongoing conversation into space, structure, and perception. Ultimately, *Dissecting the Square. Colours and Black* by Alexander James asks what new possibilities might still emerge from painting's most elemental form: the square.

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Please [click here](#) to watch a studio visit video and find out more about Alexander James [here](#). Follow James on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/alexanderjamesx/>

Date & Time:

27 April - 22 May, Monday – Friday, 10am–6pm

26 - 31 May, Tuesday – Sunday, 10am–7pm

(Open on 9 & 10 May, 10am–6pm and closed on Hong Kong public holidays)

Location: Phillips Asia Headquarters, GF, WKCDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road West, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Please visit <https://exhibitions.phillips.com/collections/dissecting-the-square> for updates

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ABOUT PHILLIPS

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