

Archive exhibition:

**The spirit of painting in the 1980s**

5 February – 23 August 2020

Coinciding with Whitechapel Gallery's major painting show this spring, this archival exhibition reconsiders a seminal moment in the recent history of painting. After a decade of conceptual and minimal art, the 1981 exhibition *New Spirit in Painting* at London's Royal Academy took the art world by storm. Lavishly painted, epically scaled canvases reasserted the centrality of painting but the exhibitors, all hailing from Europe and America, were exclusively male.

It explores the impact of the RA show, co-curated by Nicholas Serota who was then Director of Whitechapel Gallery, and organised a parallel sequence of solo surveys of painters including Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, Malcolm Morley and Julian Schnabel.

Presented here are works by artists featured at *New Spirit in Painting* – George Baselitz, Bruce McLean, Mimmo Paladino and Julian Schnabel – alongside important archival materials, to attest the significance of the exhibition in relation to the medium's development. Privileging history, mythology and the sublime, these artists came to define 1980s' postmodernism.