

Jon Schueler Estate

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ADVANCE PRESS RELEASE: Touring Exhibition, 2018-2021 ***Lost Man Blues: Jon Schueler - Art and War***

Lost Man Blues: Jon Schueler - Art and War is a landmark exhibition that encompasses one of the persistent motifs that Abstract Expressionist artist Jon Schueler infused into his paintings and wove into his writings—his experiences during World War II when he served as a navigator in the U.S. Army Air Corps. His war memories and undiagnosed PTSD haunted him and continually found expression in his post-war work.

Following medical retirement in 1944, Jon Schueler embarked on a career path of painting, first in San Francisco and then in New York. In 1957, after successful exhibitions, he consciously chose a kind of creative exile and went to Mallaig, a small fishing village on the west coast of Scotland in sight of the Isle of Skye. Without fully understanding why, he centered himself in this rugged, volatile environment for months at a time over decades, painting quickly in inspired bursts of energy charged with his full life force. The weather and light of this area became a touchstone for his preoccupation with the power of nature—whether expressed tumultuously or in subtle and hardly visible forms. Vigorously responding to the emotions evoked by the clouds, sky, sea and land, he lived, in a way, inside of his paintings, and without realizing it, slowly started healing his unseen war wounds.



St. Nazaire: *Sky Red Blues*, New York, 1982, 70 x 63 in

Lost Man Blues: Jon Schueler - Art and War will, for the first time, feature a collective group of fifteen paintings that reflect Jon Schueler's war experiences. Adopting a perspective from the skies, these oils, painted in NY from 1979 – 1989, form a powerful and cohesive visual testament to his post-war struggles, battle for memory and creative expression. In addition, there are eleven paintings that serve as a visual counterpoint-- reflecting his emotionally charged responses to nature and his memories of the changeable skyscape and seascape of his beloved Scotland.

Lost Man Blues takes its title from the painting in the exhibition commemorating the disappearance of a plane belonging to his squadron, one that did not return to England after a bombing mission over Germany. A selection of passages from "The Sound of Sleat: A Painter's Life", Jon Schueler's memoir, will accompany the paintings in the exhibition, reflecting both his harrowing war recollections and ruminations on his creative process.

Marissa Roth, 2018

Mallaig, 18 January 1973

I couldn't sleep. I slept for an hour and a quarter before the last raid over St. Nazaire –the raid with the 120 mph headwind on our return. I started to feel guilty, responsible for every death. I was afraid, not sleeping, that I'd make errors and cause the death of many. It could happen—navigation errors, pilot errors. Ending in death. Planes falling, planes shot down. So many were dying and I felt responsible. But I felt more responsible for those who might die, who would die.

The Sound of Sleat: A Painter's Life by Jon Schueler, Picador USA, 1999, p.252

The exhibition *Lost Man Blues: Jon Schueler—Art and War* was curated by Marissa Roth and was inspired by her on-going dedication to addressing the consequences of war. Roth feels that Schueler's breathtaking output as an artist, and his unyielding quest for truth, offer valuable insight into the way he came to terms with his lingering war trauma through his own creative powers.

Jon Schueler was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1916, and was an acclaimed member of the New York School. After receiving a BA and MA from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in the fall of 1941, and was sent to Molesworth, England in November 1942 as a B-17 navigator, 303rd Bomber Group, 427th Squadron. He flew missions over France and Germany and in the spring of 1943, became an Assistant Command Navigator, 8th Bomber Command, 1st Lieutenant. He was hospitalized and given medical retirement in 1944.



Grey Death Rising, New York, 1983, 50 x 79 in

Following World War II, he attended the California School of Fine Arts from 1948-51 where he was part of the vibrant group centered around the artists Clyfford Still, Richard Diebenkorn, Hassel Smith and David Park. With the help and encouragement of Clyfford Still, Schueler moved to New York in 1951.

After solo exhibitions at the Stable Gallery (1954) and with Leo Castelli (1957), Schueler spent six months in the North West of Scotland where his work, initially informed by

Abstract Expressionism, became imbued with the force of the weather and the changing skies. New York became his base from 1959 until his death in 1992 in New York City, at the age of 75. These years were punctuated by many visits to Mallaig, Scotland where he acquired a studio overlooking the Sound of Sleat in 1970. Numerous exhibitions in both the United States and the United Kingdom took place during this period, including a solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1975; the group show *Landscapes, Interior and Exterior: Avery, Rothko and Schueler* at the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975; and *Jon Schueler: The Search* at the University of Edinburgh's Talbot Rice Art Gallery in 1981. His work is represented by Berry Campbell, New York, NY and the LewAllen Galleries, Santa Fe, NM.

Lost Man Blues will be at the Housatonic Museum of Art, Bridgeport, CT from Nov.1, 2018 to Jan.18, 2019 and will tour through 2021.

**For additional information and photography, please contact:
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