

Art Basel

June 13–16, 2019
Booth P19

Alexander Gray Associates

Represented Artists:

Polly Apfelbaum

Frank Bowling

Ricardo Brey

Teresa Burga

Luis Camnitzer

Melvin Edwards

Coco Fusco

Harmony Hammond

Lorraine O'Grady

Betty Parsons

Joan Semmel

Hassan Sharif

Regina Silveira

Valeska Soares

Hugh Steers

Jack Tworkov



Melvin Edwards, *Poetry*, 2012, welded steel, 10.5h x 7.75w x 9.75d in (26.67h x 19.68w x 24.77d cm)

Frank Bowling

Frank Bowling OBE, RA (b. 1934) was born in British Guiana and maintains studios in London and New York. For over five decades, his distinct painting practice has been defined by an integration of autobiography and postcolonial geopolitics into abstraction.

Bowling moved to London in 1953, where he studied painting at the Royal College of Art from 1959–62. Emerging at the height of the British Pop movement, his early practice emphasized the figure while experimenting with expressive gestural applications of oil paint. In 1966, he moved to New York to immerse himself in Post-War American Art, and his practice shifted towards abstraction. It was in this environment that he became a unifying force for his peers— he curated the seminal 1969 exhibition *5+1*, which featured work by Melvin Edwards, Al Loving, Jack Whitten, William T. Williams, Daniel LaRue Johnson, and himself.

Concurrent with his move towards abstraction, Bowling sought inventive ways in which to continue incorporating pictorial imagery into his work. In 1964, the artist began screen-printing personal photographs onto canvas, notably a 1953 image of his mother's general store in Guiana, Bowling's Variety Store. He would go on to create a number of these works in the following years, embedding personal narratives into the surface of his paintings. Subsequently, Bowling began his groundbreaking series of *Map Paintings* (1967–71). In these expansive, chromatic canvases, thin soaks of acrylic provide the ground for images of re-oriented continental landmasses spray-painted with stencils. As the curator Okwui Enwezor explained, "by staking a ground around the idea that abstraction need not be disunited from content, especially as it intersects cultural experience and historical subject matter, Bowling boldly experimented with diverse modes of building a painted surface."

Since 1971, Bowling has abandoned his use of figurative imagery, and focused primarily on material and process. In place of the earlier map formations, geometry provides the foundation for his compositions. He begins with swathes of color and applies gestural drips ovetop, harnessing multiple techniques to create dynamic, yet unified surfaces. In this way, he inherits and interprets the multifaceted legacy of American abstraction— both gesture and field. His palette is vibrant and diverse, fluctuating between warm saturated tones and soft pastel hues, muddied textures and sometimes shimmering surfaces.

In *Morning Light* (2019), Bowling crafts a work from two stacked planes of color. Suggesting a seascape, the composition expands on Bowling's 1980s abstract "waterscapes," which are inspired by English masters like J.M.W. Turner. Inviting narratives around migration and diaspora via its strong horizon line, the work returns to themes the artist explored in earlier series, including in his 1960s *Map Paintings*, which are structured around his Afro-Caribbean roots and the legacies of colonialism. Complicating these readings, the work's title emphasizes Bowling's interest in the natural world and its atmospheric effects. Ultimately crafting a work whose horizontal bands of color reference art history, geopolitics, and perceived reality, Bowling deftly harnesses the multivalent potential of abstraction to communicate complex concerns.



Morning Light, 2019, acrylic on collaged canvas, 83.25h x 72.25w in (211.46h x 183.51w cm)

Luis Camnitzer

Luis Camnitzer (b.1937) is a German-born Uruguayan artist and writer who moved to New York in 1964. He was at the vanguard of 1960s Conceptualism, working primarily in printmaking, sculpture, and installations. Camnitzer's artwork explores subjects such as repression under systems of power, pedagogical norms, and the deconstruction of familiar frameworks. His humorous, biting, and often politically charged use of language as an art medium has distinguished his practice for over four decades.

In 1964 he co-founded The New York Graphic Workshop, along with fellow artists, Argentine Liliana Porter and Venezuelan José Guillermo Castillo (1941–1999). For six years until the end of the workshop in 1970, they examined the conceptual meaning behind printmaking, and sought to test and expand the definition of the medium. As his interest in language unfolded, so did his aim to identify socio-political problems through his art. Camnitzer responded in great part to the growing wave of Latin American military regimes taking root in the late '60s, but his work also points to the dynamic political landscape of his adopted country, the United States.

In the early 1970s, Luis Camnitzer focused his interest on making objects, a shift marked by the significant and unique *Object Boxes* (1973-78). The wooden boxes with glass fronts and backs bear brass plates low on their faces, engraved with a title in English or Spanish, and contain additional elements. Continuing in Camnitzer's tradition of overtly linking image and word, the *Object Boxes* allow the viewer to assume and identify a relationship between the coupled elements and text. However, the works exist neither as definitions nor illustrations, as the text on each box predates its contents. Ultimately, the relationship between language and object remains a spontaneous construct, a narrative assembled by the viewer. In many ways, these boxes anticipate one of Camnitzer's most important works, the *Uruguayan Torture Series* (1983–84). Though Camnitzer never left New York, his practice remains intrinsically connected to his homeland and the whole of Latin America. This consistent dedication cements his place as a key figure in shaping debates around ideas of post-Colonialism, Conceptualism, and pedagogy.

Camnitzer's work has been shown at important institutions since the 1960s, including a large-scale retrospective at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (2019), one-person exhibitions at El Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Santiago, Chile (2013); Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2011); El Museo del Barrio, New York (1995); Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City (1993); and List Visual Arts Center at M.I.T., Cambridge, MA (1991). Retrospectives of his work have been presented at Lehman College Art Gallery in the Bronx, New York (1991); Kunsthalle Kiel, Germany (2003); Daros Museum in Zurich, Switzerland, El Museo del Barrio, New York; Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Bogotá, Colombia (2010–13). Camnitzer's work is in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Tate, London; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; among others.



The Reason of Alchemy, 1977, mixed media, 13.5h x 9.88w x 2d in (34.29h x 25.08w x 5.08d cm)



Absent Line, 1971–1975, mixed media, 12.1h x 9.9w x 1.9d in (30.73h x 25.15w x 4.83d cm)



Rainbowed Statement, 1973–1975, mixed media, 12.19h x 9.88w x 2d in (30.96h x 25.08w x 5.08d cm)

Melvin Edwards

Melvin Edwards (b.1937) is a pioneer in the history of contemporary African-American art and sculpture. Born in Houston, Texas, he began his artistic career at the University of Southern California, where he met and was mentored by Hungarian painter Francis de Erdely. In 1965 the Santa Barbara Museum of Art organized Edwards' first solo exhibition, which launched his professional career. He moved to New York City in 1967, where shortly after his arrival, his work was exhibited at the then newly created Studio Museum, and in 1970 became the first African-American sculptor to have works presented in a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum.

Edwards' work reflects his engagement with the history of race, labor, violence, as well as with themes of African Diaspora. Making welding his preferred medium, his compositions are studies in abstraction and minimalism. Edwards creates sculptures by welding metal objects such as tools, knives, hooks, and machine parts, to construct objects distinguished by formal simplicity and powerful materiality. He is best known for his sculptural series *Lynch Fragments*, which spans three periods: the early 1960s, when he responded to racial violence in the United States; the early 1970s, when his activism concerning the Vietnam War motivated him to return to the series; and from 1978 to the present, as he continues to explore a variety of themes.

The work on view, *Ame Eghan* (1975), belongs to Edwards' series of *Rockers*, which he began in 1970. Taking its foundational C-shape design from his grandmother's rocking chair, Edwards' series grew out of his interest in kinetic sculpture. He wanted to find an alternative, however, to the kineticism already explored in Calder's mobiles and Tinguely's mechanized sculptures. Edwards centered his series around the idea of balance and potential movement. More recent works like *Steel Life (After Winter)* (2017) serve as an example of Edwards' *Steel Life* sculptures, which he began in 1985. The title and composition of these works come from the classical genre of still life paintings, which the artist evokes through his arrangement of steel tools captured in stasis.

Melvin Edwards' work has been widely exhibited nationally and internationally. In 1993, the Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, NY organized *Melvin Edwards Sculpture: A Thirty-Year Retrospective 1963–1993*. In 2015, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, TX organized a second retrospective, *Melvin Edwards: Five Decades*, featuring work from the early 1960s to the present. This retrospective traveled to the Zimmerli Museum of Art, Rutgers University, NJ and to the Columbus Museum of Art, OH. In 2017, Brown University in Providence, RI presented the solo exhibition, *Melvin Edwards: Festivals, Funerals, and New Life*. In 2018, an exhibition of the artist's sculptures, *Melvin Edwards: Lynch Fragments*, was held at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in Brazil. In 2019, the Baltimore Museum of Art organized the exhibition *Melvin Edwards: The Architecture of Being*, which will travel to the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA and the University of Southern California (USC) Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Edwards' work has been featured in innumerable group exhibitions, including *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom (2017), traveled to Crystal Bridges Museum of American, Bentonville, AK (2018), Brooklyn Museum, NY (2018), and currently on view at The Broad, Los Angeles (2019).



Steel Life (After Winter), 2017, welded steel, 14h x 12w x 6.5d in (35.56h x 30.48w x 16.51d cm)



Ame Eghan, 1975, welded steel, 12.5h x 19.5w x 19.5d in (31.75h x 49.53w x 49.53d cm)

Coco Fusco

Over the past twenty-five years, Coco Fusco has explored the ways that intercultural dynamics affect the construction of the self and ideas about cultural otherness. Her work is informed by multicultural and postcolonial discourses as well as by feminist and psychoanalytic theories. Her investigation of intercultural dynamics has yielded art projects about ethnographic displays, animal psychology, sex tourism in the Caribbean, labor conditions in free trade zones, suppressed colonial records of indigenous struggles, and military interrogation in the War on Terror. Much of her recent work focuses on Cuban culture in the post-Communist era.

In her new series *The Undiscovered Amerindians Tour* (1992–1994/2019), consisting of a selection of documentary photographs from her iconic 1992–94 performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Fusco revisits the performance's historical impact 25 years after its original presentation. By de-saturating the images into black and white, Fusco effectively satirizes the anthropological gaze—similar to the imagery of Margaret Mead, for example, and other photographic portrayals of indigenous life that regularly appeared in magazines like *National Geographic* throughout the 20th century. Arranged in a grid, the images emphasize the interactive aspects of the performance, while the superimposed black-and-white grain dates the images, further reinforcing Fusco's critical gesture.

Fusco was born in New York City in 1960. She received her B.A. in Semiotics from Brown University (1982), her M.A. in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University (1985) and her Ph.D. in Art and Visual Culture from Middlesex University (2007). She is a recipient of a 2018 Rabkin Prize for Art Criticism, a 2016 Greenfield Prize, a 2014 Cintas Fellowship, a 2013 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2013 Absolut Art Writing Award, a 2013 Fulbright Fellowship, a 2012 US Artists Fellowship and a 2003 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts. Fusco's performances and videos have been presented in the 56th Venice Biennale, Frieze Special Projects, two Whitney Biennials (2008 and 1993), BAM's *Next Wave* Festival, the Berlinale, Mercosul and other biennials in Liverpool, Sydney, Johannesburg, Shanghai and Kwangu. Her iconic performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* (1992–1994), created in collaboration with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, was featured in the 1993 Whitney Biennial. The video documentary about the performance, *The Couple in the Cage*, has been screened in over 200 venues around the world.

Fusco's creative practice also encompasses writing about art and cultural politics. Her most recent book *Dangerous Moves: Performance and Politics in Cuba* was issued by Tate Publications in 2015. A Spanish translation was published by Turner Libros in 2017. She is also the author of *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (1995), *The Bodies that Were Not Ours and Other Writings* (2001), and *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators* (2008). She is the editor of *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (1999) and *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self* (2003).

In addition to creating numerous works inspired by postcolonial issues, Fusco has engaged in multidisciplinary research in Cuba since the 1980s. Her most recent video essays concentrate on iconic sites that define the island's culture and censored Cuban artists and poets who have engaged with political issues in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.



The Undiscovered Amerindians Tour, 1992–1994/2019, archival pigment print in 10 parts, 12.88h x 18.88w in (32.7h x 47.94w cm). Edition of 20 + 2 AP.

Harmony Hammond

Harmony Hammond (b.1944) was a leading figure in the development of the feminist art movement in New York in the early 1970s. She attended the University of Minnesota from 1963–67, before moving to New York in 1969. She was a co-founder of A.I.R., the first women's cooperative art gallery in New York (1972) and *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics* (1976). Since 1984, Hammond has lived and worked in northern New Mexico, teaching at the University of Arizona, Tucson, from 1989–2006. Hammond's earliest feminist work combined gender politics with post-minimal concerns of materials and process, frequently occupying a space between painting and sculpture.

For years, she worked with found and repurposed materials and objects such as rags, straw, latex rubber, hair, linoleum, roofing tin, and burnt wood as well as buckets, gutters and water troughs as a means to introduce content into the world of abstraction. Hammond's near-monochrome paintings of the last decade, including *Bandaged Grid #7* (2016–17), participate in the narrative of modernist abstraction at the same time as they insist on an oppositional discourse of feminist and queer content. Their focus on materiality and the indexical, suggesting topographies of body and place, derives from and remains in conversation with, her feminist work of the 1970s. A second ongoing series of overtly political work in various media ranging from bronze sculpture to digital prints, deals with issues of intolerance, censorship and self-censorship.

A survey exhibition of Hammond's work is currently on view at The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT. Hammond's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in venues such as Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria (2016); Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany (2015); RedLine Art Space, Denver, CO (2014); MoMA PS1, New York (2008); Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2008); Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria (2007); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2007); SITE Santa Fe, NM (2002); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (1996); Brooklyn Museum, New York (1985); New Museum, New York (1982), Downtown Whitney Museum, New York (1978), Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN (1968); among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe; Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, among others. She has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim, Joan Mitchell, Pollock-Krasner, Esther and Adolph Gottlieb and Art Matters Foundations, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. Hammond's book *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art and the Martial Arts* (TSL Press, 1984), is considered a seminal publication on 1970's Feminist art. Her groundbreaking book *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (Rizzoli, 2000) received a Lambda Literary Award, and remains the primary text on the subject. In 2013, Hammond was honored with The College Art Association's Distinguished Feminist Award. She received both the College Art Association's Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award and Anonymous was a Woman Award in 2014. In 2016, the Getty Research Institute acquired Hammond's archive.



Bandaged Grid #7, 2016-2017, oil and mixed media on canvas, 74.5h x 61w in (189.23h x 154.94w cm)

Betty Parsons

Betty Parsons (b.1900, New York, NY – d.1982, Southold, NY) was an abstract painter and sculptor who is best known as a dealer of mid-century art. Throughout her storied career as a gallerist, she maintained a rigorous artistic practice, painting during weekends in her Long Island studio. Parsons' eye for innovative talent stemmed from her own training as an artist and guided her commitment to new and emerging artists of her time, impacting the canon of twentieth-century art in the United States.

Parsons was drawn to art at an early age when in 1913 she attended the Armory Show in New York City. As she came of age, she became dissatisfied with the traditional models of education and limited occupations for women at the time. In 1935, she had her first solo exhibition of paintings at Midtown Galleries, New York, and following this show, she was offered a job installing works and selling paintings on commission, sparking her curatorial interest and developing her professional identity as an art dealer. In 1946, Parsons opened her eponymous gallery in New York, and after the closure of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in 1947, she inherited Guggenheim's roster of artists, including Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Clyfford Still. While her gallery's legacy is closely tied to these leading figures, Parsons also championed a diverse program of artists, showcasing work by women, gays, and artists of color, reflecting her liberal and inclusive values, and eclectic tastes.

While operating her gallery, Parsons continued to make art. Following her formal training as a sculptor and landscape watercolorist, Parsons made a stylistic departure in 1947 when she began to work abstractly to capture what she called "sheer energy" and "the new spirit." From the late 1940s onward, her paintings conveyed her passion for spontaneity and creative play through impulsive gestural brushstrokes and organic forms. She utilized thin layers of vibrant paint, often allowing the surface of the canvas to remain visible, as seen in *Enter White I* (1967). Parsons had a long interest in ancient and ethnographic arts, as well as mystical and non-Western spiritual practices, including meditation. Through these interests, she chose to set aside the rigid theoretical framework of contemporary abstraction, allowing instead for expressive improvisation in her paintings.

Throughout her life, Parsons traveled widely in pursuit of new influences, taking frequent trips to Mexico, France, Italy, Africa, and Japan. She meticulously recorded her travels in her journals as watercolors and sketches, and often drew on a sense of place in her work. In the 1960s, Parsons would increase her time on Long Island, having built a painting studio designed by the sculptor Tony Smith, perched above the Long Island Sound. Her weekends would be consumed by observing nature, and her painting became increasingly saturated with color. In addition to painting, in the late 1970s she returned to sculpture, making polychrome assemblages of discarded wood and driftwood she collected on the beach. Parsons died in 1982, a year after closing her 57th Street gallery, leaving a multi-faceted legacy as a woman, and an artist, of the twentieth century.



Enter White I, 1967, acrylic on canvas, 30h x 31w in (76.2h x 78.74w cm)

Joan Semmel

Joan Semmel (b.1932) has centered her painting practice around issues of the body, from desire to aging, as well as those of identity and cultural imprinting. In the 1960s, Semmel began her painting career in Spain and South America, where she experimented with abstraction. Returning to New York in the early 1970s, she turned toward figurative paintings, constructing compositions in response to pornography, popular culture, and concerns around representation. Her practice traces the transformation that women's sexuality has seen in the last century, and emphasizes the possibility for female autonomy through the body.

In the 1970s, Semmel began her exploration of female sexuality with the *Sex Paintings* and *Erotic Series*, large scale images of sexual encounters. In these works, Semmel employs expressive color and loose, gestural brush strokes to depict couples entwined in various intimate positions. Produced in a cultural landscape shaped by Second-wave Feminism, the two series celebrate female sexuality, heralding a feminist approach to painting and representation. Building on these paintings, in 1974, Semmel embraced a more realistic style, and began to use her own body as her subject, shifting the perspective from that of an observer to a more personal point of view. *Cross-Over* (1979) is an example of Semmel's *Echoing Images* series (1979-1981), which exemplifies her ongoing stylistic concerns and experimentation with both abstraction and realism. The series is characterized by the repetition of the main compositional figure in a smaller realist form and a second in a large expressionistic version.

Recent paintings continue the artist's exploration of self-portraiture and female identity, representing the artist's body doubled, fragmented, and in-motion. Dissolving the space between artist and model, viewer and subject, the paintings are notable for their celebration of color and flesh, as seen in *Aura* (2016) and *Turning* (2018). Semmel applies saturated abstract colors in a variety of styles, merging figure and ground. Approaching her own form as a site of self-expression, in these works she challenges the objectification and fetishization of women's bodies by redefining the female nude through radical imagery that celebrates the aging process—refuting centuries of art historical idealization.

Over five decades, Semmel's evolving practice has been characterized by a deep conviction of the possibility of expanding painting traditions to manifest her "passion as a feminist to present female images that undercut the prevailing models, and to use paint as an instrument of joy and revelation."

A traveling retrospective of Joan Semmel's work is planned for 2021. Her paintings have been featured in exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum, New York (2018); Jewish Museum, New York (2018); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); Dallas Contemporary, TX (2016); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014); among others. Semmel's paintings are part of the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Museum of Modern Art, New York; among others.



Right: *Cross-Over*, 1979, oil on canvas, 64h x 90w in (162.56h x 228.6w cm). Left: detail.



Aura, 2016, oil on canvas, 72h x 60w in (182.88h x 152.4w cm)



Turning, 2018, oil on canvas, 72h x 60w in (182.88h x 152.4w cm)

Hassan Sharif

Hassan Sharif (b.1951, Bandar Lengeh, Iran – d.2016, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) lived and worked in Dubai. Recognized as a pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East, Sharif's artworks surpass the limits of discipline or singular approach, encompassing performance, installation, drawing, painting, and assemblage. Since the late 1970s, he maintained a practice as a cultural producer and facilitator, moving between roles as artist, educator, critic, activist, and mentor to contemporary artists in the U.A.E.

After familiarizing himself with the ideas of Dada and Fluxus art during his studies in the early 1980s at Byam Shaw School of Art in London (now Central Saint Martins), Sharif created performance-based works that engaged with repetition, landscape, and the body, themes that he continued to explore throughout his practice. Sharif first incorporated weaving into his work in his *Objects* series (1982–2016) as a means to critically explore the increasing modernization and industrialization occurring in the U.A.E.

An acute awareness of his environment led Sharif to embrace constant experimentation and a variety of materials. He focused on experiments and semi-systems, utilizing the grid to draft constructivist structures. Sharif aimed to create art that was linked to society and spoke to universal aspects of daily life. He manifested this interest through his use of ordinary materials. He incorporated cotton, textile, metal, cord, plastic, and everyday objects to create works that reflect contemporary concerns such as consumerism, manufacturing, and commercialization of handicrafts.

Hassan Sharif was a founding member of the Emirates Fine Art Society and the Art Atelier in the Youth Theater and Arts, Dubai. In 2007, he was one of four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution for promoting contemporary Emirati artists. The first Emirati to have his work shown in the Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar, Sharif was also among the selected artists to represent the U.A.E. during its first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2009. In 2017, Sharif was the subject of a retrospective exhibition, *Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist*, curated by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi and presented by The Sharjah Art Foundation, U.A.E. A previous survey of Sharif's work was curated by Catherine David and Mohammed Kazem and presented by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage/Platform for Visual Arts, U.A.E. (2011). His work has been shown in recent exhibitions at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar (2016); the Sharjah Biennial (2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2014); Fundação Casa França-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (2014); and the International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia (2012); among others. Sharif's artwork is included in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar; Sharjah Art Museum, U.A.E.; Sharjah Art Foundation, U.A.E.; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; the Sittard Center, The Netherlands; and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, U.A.E., and Guggenheim, New York.



Copper 1, 2012, copper, 31.1h x 23.2w in (78.99h x 58.93w cm)



Dance - No. 2, 2014, mixed media, 20.5h x 9.5w x 4.7d in (52.07h x 24.13w x 11.94d cm)



Dance - No. 3, 2014, mixed media, 29.5h x 16.25w x 7d in (74.93h x 41.27w x 17.78d cm)

Jack Whitten

Jack Whitten (1939—2018) began his earliest experiments in painting during the 1960s by creating dynamic works inspired by Abstract Expressionism. Born and raised in Bessemer, Alabama, he moved to New York City in 1960 to attend The Cooper Union. Noted for raucous colors and density of gesture combined with topical content, his artwork from this period manifests emotionally complex meditations on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights movement, and the Vietnam War.

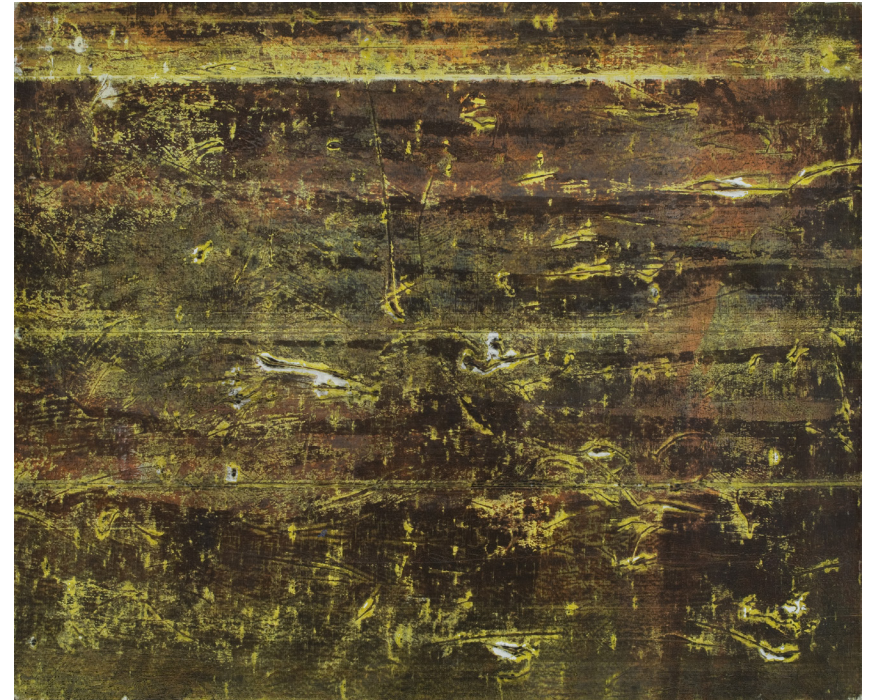
Whitten turned to abstraction in the 1970s as he developed new methods to create paintings that more closely resonated with photography. *The First Loading Zone* (1973) belongs to the artist's signature 1970s series of *Slab Paintings*. Created by building up layers of acrylic and drawing a tool across the surface—an afro pick, saw blade, rubber squeegee, etc.—these works challenged conventional understandings of art-making, pioneering a process-based approach to abstraction.

Produced in one pass—a single gesture—Whitten's *Slab Paintings* suggest frozen movement; their appearance anticipating Gerhard Richter's later blurred, quasi-photographic compositions. (Further emphasizing this connection to the photographic, the artist stated he “processed” his paintings, ultimately producing them with a proprietary 12-foot long tool he dubbed the “developer.”) Rather than building up passages of acrylic, in this series Whitten placed objects beneath the canvas (“disrupters”) so that when he dragged an implement across the surface shapes appeared as if in relief. The rough lines and scratches of *The First Loading Zone* reveal how he utilized this approach to create fluid, disrupted grounds that read as energetic imprints of past actions.

In the 1980s, Whitten utilized paint as a metaphor for skin as he experimented with “casting” acrylic paints and compounds to create new surfaces and textures. In contrast to the didactic and narrative-based work made by many African American artists during this period, Whitten's artwork married gesture with aspects of sculpture and collage to push the limits of the medium.

Continuing to question the limits of painting, in the 1990s, Whitten's experiments with paint became progressively more sculptural. Transforming paint into tiles, he repurposed the medium into a material to construct mosaics on canvas. The resulting artworks allude to ancient architecture and murals while serving as homages and memorials to celebrated public figures and close friends.

Before his death in 2018, Whitten repurposed the gamut of techniques he developed over the decades to further deepen his engagement with art history. Re-contextualizing his experimental approach to painting, he achieved innovative new surfaces, structures, and symbols.



The First Loading Zone, 1973, acrylic on canvas, 59.8h x 72w in (151.89h x 182.88w cm)

Published by Alexander Gray Associates on the occasion of

Art Basel

June 13–16, 2019

Booth P19

Basel, Switzerland

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Printing: Puritan Capital

Through exhibitions, research, and artist representation, the Alexander Gray Associates spotlights artistic movements and artists who emerged in the mid- to late-Twentieth Century. Influential in cultural, social, and political spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America.

About Art Basel

Art Basel show brings the international artworld together, with 291 of the world's leading galleries showing the works of over 4,000 artists. A full program of artworld talks takes place each day. Exhibitions and events are also offered by cultural institutions in Basel and the surrounding area, creating an exciting, region-wide art week.

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