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Contact: Garth Greenan
(212) 929-1351
garth@garthgreenan.com
www.garthgreenan.com

Al Loving: Space, Time, Light

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Al Loving: Space, Time, Light*, an exhibition of paintings and mixed media constructions at **545 W 20th Street**. Opening on October 25, 2018, this show is the first since the artist's major solo exhibition at Art + Practice (2017, Los Angeles), *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*, which later traveled to the Baltimore Museum of Art (2017–2018).

This exhibition provides an in-depth look at Loving's work from 1977 to 1993—a period of immense transformation for an artist with a keen eye for color and an ever-changing attitude toward form and composition. Chiefly inspired by Henri Matisse, Loving's first mature works were geometric, hard-edge abstractions, painted in bright colors. His solo show at the Whitney Museum in 1969 featured these bold, simplified color studies. Despite the early critical and commercial success of this exhibition, after 1972, he began his most experimental phase, making use of sweeping expanses of richly colored fabric suspended on the wall. Made from torn canvas, these wall-hangings dispensed with notions of centralized composition, figure/ground separation, and pictorial frame. Their rich and intuitive array of colors stretches irregularly, extending to the floor, encompassing the surrounding space, and engulfing the viewer.



Space, Time, Light #1, 1977

In later years, Loving would continue to employ this experimental spirit. The Art + Practice exhibition charted the moment after the artist turned his focus to the medium of paper. In works such as *Wythe Avenue #26* (1993), he combined hundreds of pieces of cut and torn paper into rich and intuitive arrays of color. These swirls and jagged spikes stretch irregularly, spiraling outward, surrounding the space, and engulfing the viewer. These collages, though abstract in form, recall the contemporaneous, ecstatic collages of Romare Bearden, a seminal figure of the Harlem art world of the 1960s. Bearden's figurative compositions are just as joyous and at times, musical, as Loving's and served as an important influence for the artist.

Born in Detroit in 1935, Loving relocated to New York in 1968. Unlike other African-American artists whose art focused on the racial politics of the era, Loving was a staunch abstractionist. His works were built upon strict yet simple geometric shapes—often hexagonal or cubic modules. Inspired by Hans Hoffmann (who taught Loving's mentor Al Mullen), Loving concentrated on the tension between flatness and spatial

illusionism. He explored this tension using a hard-edged geometric vocabulary related to Minimalism—as in *Untitled*, 1969, which uses a strategic layering of cubic forms and juxtaposition of warm and cool colors to create an optical play of three-dimensionality.

Throughout his career, Loving had solo exhibitions at many well-known institutions, including: Gertrude Kasle Gallery (1969, 1970, Detroit), William Zierler, Inc. (1971, 1972, 1973, New York), Fischbach Gallery (1974, 1976, New York), The Studio Museum in Harlem (1977, 1986, New York), Diane Brewer Gallery (1980, 1983, New York), June Kelly Gallery (1988, 1990, 1992, New York), the Neuberger Museum of Art (1998, Purchase, New York), and Kenkeleba House (2005, New York). His work was also featured in many important group exhibitions, such as *L'art vivant aux États-Unis* (1970, Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul, France), *Contemporary Black Artists in America* (1971, Whitney Museum of American Art), *Lamp Black: Afro-American Artists, New York and Boston* (1973, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), *Another Generation* (1979, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York), *Afro-American Abstraction* (1981, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Queens), and *The Appropriate Object* (1989, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo), among others.

Most recently, Loving's work appeared in *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975* (2006, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro), *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack, 1949–1978* (2009, Seattle Art Museum), *America is Hard to See* (2015, Whitney Museum of American Art), *Marrakech Biennale 6* (2016, Morocco), *Delirious: Art at the Limits of Reason, 1950–1980* (2017–2018, Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* (2017, Tate Modern; 2018, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; 2018–2019, Brooklyn Museum), *Outliers and American Vanguard Art* (2018, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; 2018, High Museum of Art, Atlanta; 2018–2019, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

Loving's work is featured in the collections of major museums around the country, including: the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Modern Art; the National Gallery of Art; the Pérez Art Museum Miami; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Massachusetts; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent the Estate of **Al Loving**.

Al Loving: Space, Time, Light will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through **Friday, December 21, 2018**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, **please contact the gallery at (212) 929-1351, or email info@garthgreenan.com**.

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