

STUDIO MUSEUM HARLEM

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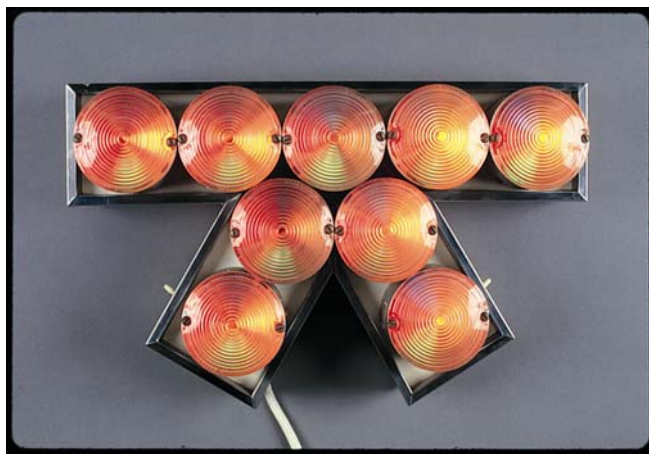
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Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction 1964 - 1980

On view: April 5, 2006 through July 2, 2006



Alma Thomas, *Space*, 1966. Collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem



Tom Lloyd, *Narokan*, 1966. Collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Darwin K. Davidson

NEW YORK, NY, March 6, 2006 - The Studio Museum in Harlem proudly presents *Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction 1964-1980*, comprised of 40 works by 15 leading artists of the era. Focusing on a core group who dedicated themselves to experimentation with structure and materials, this exhibition presents a range of hybrid objects, paintings and sculptures formed from the unique, non-objective visual languages of abstraction. Organized by guest-curator Kellie Jones, Assistant Professor in the Departments of History of Art and African American Studies at Yale University, *Energy/Experimentation* provides a broad historical context for Black abstract artists and their work, and will be on view from April 5, 2006 through July 2, 2006.

Ranging from William T. Williams' complex polyrhythms and geometric paintings to Alma Thomas' vivid canvases, works in the exhibition employ inventive explorations of color, subject and texture. Engaged with trends of post-painterly abstraction and systematic painting, they are frontal, holistic and utilize primary forms. At once

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emotional, optical and vibrant, Howardena Pindell's early stained drawings and later confetti-laden canvases and Al Loving's dyed canvases pose questions about the nature of surface. Such investigations move into three dimensions with Tom Lloyd's vibrant, electronic light pieces, which were included in the Studio Museum's first show, *Electronic Refractions II*. Fred Eversley's cool forms in plastic resin, and Barbara Chase-Riboud's mix of bronze and silk engage space and texture.

While more militant practitioners and institutions felt that figuration was a better way to fight the derogatory imagery that centered on people of African descent, abstract artists used spatial and pictorial energy, as well as themes and titles, to make the social ferment of the time present in their work. These artists also kept their projects socially involved by exploring the public aspects of exhibition, and crafting art with the idea of encompassing the viewer, connecting them to the work's energy, and making bodies aware of their corporeality. *Energy/Experimentation* illuminates the contributions made to American abstraction by a group that challenged artistic, technological and social assumptions of their era.



Melvin Edwards, *Cotton Hangup*, 1966. Collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hans Burkhardt



William T. Williams, *Trane*, 1969. Collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem, Gift of Charles Cowles

ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION

Frank Bowling
Barbara Chase-Riboud
Ed Clark
Melvin Edwards
Fred Eversley
Sam Gilliam
Daniel LaRue Johnson
Tom Lloyd

Al Loving
Joe Overstreet
Howardena Pindell
Haywood Bill Rivers
Alma Thomas
Jack Whitten
William T. Williams

A full-color catalogue, including essays by Kellie Jones, Lowery Stokes Sims, Guthrie Ramsey, and Courtney J. Martin, as well as a roundtable discussion between Kellie Jones, Lowery Stokes Sims, Melvin Edwards, William T. Williams, Julie Mehretu and Louis Cameron, will accompany the exhibition.

EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In conjunction with *Energy/Experimentation*, The Studio Museum in Harlem's Department of Education and Public Programs offers a range of programs, activities and events that will incorporate artists, scholars, and critics into thought-provoking discussions on a wide variety of issues central to the works on view in the exhibition. For more information on public programs, please visit www.studiomuseum.org, or call 212-864-4500 (ext. 264).

ABOUT THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture, through its exhibitions, Artists-in-Residence program, education and public programming, permanent collection, archival and research facilities.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is committed to serving as a unique resource in its local community and in national and international arenas by making art works and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer and providing a context within which to address the contemporary and historical issues presented through art created by artists of African descent.

Since opening in a rented loft at Fifth Avenue and 125th Street in 1968, The Studio Museum has earned recognition for its catalytic role in promoting the works of artists of African descent. The Museum's Artists-In-Residence program has supported over 90 graduates who have gone on to establish highly regarded careers. A wide variety of Education and Public Programs have brought the African American experience alive for the public by means of lectures, dialogues, panel discussions, and performances, as well as interpretive programs both on-site and off-site for students and teachers. The Exhibitions program has also expanded the scope of art historical literature through the production of scholarly catalogues, brochures and pamphlets.

The Studio Museum's Permanent Collection contains over 1,600 works, including drawings, pastels, prints, photographs, mixed media works, and installations. It is comprised of works created by artists during their residency, as well as pieces given to the Museum to create an art historical framework for artists of African descent. Featured in the collection are Terry Adkins, Romare Bearden, Skunder Boghossian, Robert Colescott, Melvin Edwards, Richard Hunt, Hector Hyppolite, Serge Jolimeau, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Philome Obin, Betye Saar, Nari Ward, and Hale Woodruff among others. The Museum also is the custodian of an extensive archive of the work of photographer James VanDerZee, the quintessential chronicler of the Harlem community from 1906 to 1984.

Operation of the Studio Museum in Harlem is supported with public funds provided by The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation through the office of Sen. David A. Paterson. Major funding is also provided by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation and The Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, LEF Foundation, The Scherman Foundation, Inc., Goldman, Sachs & Co., Credit Suisse First Boston, The New York Times Company Foundation, American Express Company, Altria Group Inc., New York Stock Exchange Foundation, Pfizer, Inc., The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation, Inc., The Cowles Charitable Trust, Lord & Taylor, Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse Foundation, The Moody's Foundation, Morgan Stanley and The Young & Rubicam Foundation.

ADDRESS

The Studio Museum in Harlem is located at 144 West 125th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard and Lenox Avenue. Subway: A, B, C, D, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 to 125th Street. Bus: M-2, M-7, M-10, M-100, M-101, M-102 or BX-15.

ADMISSION

Suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid id) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. The first Saturday of every month is free for everyone.

HOURS

The museum is open Wednesday through Friday, and Sunday from 12 – 6, and from 10 – 6 on Saturdays. The Museum is closed on Monday, Tuesday and major holidays.

Phone: 212 864 4500/ fax: 212 864- 4800/ Web site: www.studiomuseum.org.



Ray A. Llanos