

For immediate release

DE WAIN VALENTINE

Works from the 1960s and 1970s

June 26 – August 7, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, June 26, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with the artist: 10:30 AM



Column Lavender, 1968
Cast polyester resin
91 ¾ x 34 ½ x 17 ¼ inches (233 x 87.6 x 43.8 cm)
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David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of works from the 1960s and 1970s by De Wain Valentine (b. 1936). A key member of what is often referred to as the Light and Space movement, Valentine is distinguished in particular by his in-depth understanding of synthetic materials and his ability to transform these industrial products into artworks that reveal his fascination with light, transparency, reflection, and surface. On view at 525 and 533 West 19th Street in New York, this exhibition will focus on the artist's pioneering achievements in polyester resin and present the key forms that he articulated and returned to during this period. The exhibition, which is organized in cooperation with the artist, will include a selection of works that fully demonstrates Valentine's range and virtuosity with his chosen material.

Valentine came to Los Angeles in the mid-1960s, moving there from his native Colorado, where he was already an established sculptor, to teach a class in plastics technology at UCLA. He had begun working with plastics as early as the 1950s, but it was not until his arrival in the artistically fertile environment of Los Angeles that he started to utilize the material in a more expansive way.

Particularly influenced by the California landscape, Valentine has noted, "All the work is about the sea and the sky. I would like to have some way...to cut out large chunks of ocean or sky and say, 'Here it is.'" Despite his grand ambitions, Valentine was initially confronted with material limitations, as

polyester resins at the time could not be poured in volumes that exceeded 50 pounds. Not willing to accept this restriction, he partnered with Hastings Plastics in 1966 to create a new polyester resin that could be cast in larger quantities. The resultant material, which is commercially known as Valentine MasKast Resin, not only allowed the artist to dramatically increase the scale of his work, but also continues today to have applications beyond the realm of art. Polyester resin, with its inherent ability to both contain and reflect light while delivering a luminous dimensionality, would from that point on form the foundation of Valentine's practice.

On view will be a number of Valentine's "Columns," corporeally scaled sculptures cast in colored polyester resins that recede from a wider base up to a narrow tip. These works have a prismatic effect, both transmitting and refracting light, and thus capturing an optical sense of depth, space, and color. Executed in varying heights and widths, works such as *Column Yellow* and *Column Lavender* (both 1968) engage the viewer on a phenomenological level.

A highlight of the exhibition will be Valentine's twin *Gray Columns* (1975-76), which each stand twelve feet tall and have never before been exhibited together in their intended configuration. Originally executed for Baxter Travenol Laboratories' newly built corporate headquarters in Deerfield, Illinois, Valentine had conceived of two immense vertical columns standing side by

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side, but because of architectural modifications (the ceiling in the company's reception area was lowered at a late stage of construction), Valentine was forced to install the two slabs on their sides.

The exhibition will additionally include a number of Valentine's "Circles," a shape he began to experiment with in 1969. These works display not only the artist's mastery of geometrical form, but also highlight his command of color in sculptures like *Circle Blue Smoke Flow Blue* (1970), with its dappled blue-gray surface, and *Circle Gold-Rose* (1970), with its optically shifting hues. A room of these large-scale circles was installed in Valentine's 1970 solo presentation at the Pasadena Art Museum, known at that time as an important platform for young artistic talent. A selection of Valentine's smaller forms, such as rings, discs, and double pyramids, which make clear the theoretical basis of his practice, will also be on view.

This will be the first historical survey of Valentine's work in New York and his first solo presentation here in more than thirty years. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at David Zwirner. A fully illustrated catalogue with new scholarship by Robin Clark is forthcoming from David Zwirner Books.

1 De Wain Valentine, quoted in Tom Learner, Rachel Rivenc, and Emma Richardson, eds., *From Start to Finish: De Wain Valentine's Gray Column*. Exh. cat. (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2011), p. 2.

De Wain Valentine was born in 1936 in Fort Collins, Colorado. He received both a BFA (1958) and an MFA (1960) from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and in 1958 he attended the prestigious Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art in Connecticut. He has received grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (1980) and the National Endowment for the Arts (1981). Important early solo exhibitions were held at Ace Gallery, Los Angeles (1968); Galerie Bruno Bischofberger, Zurich (1969); Pasadena Art Museum (1970); Long Beach Museum (1971); La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art (1971); Galleries Denise Rene, New York (1973); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1979); and PS1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York (1981). More recent solo exhibitions include the J. Paul Getty Museum (2011); Colorado State University Art Museum, Fort Collins (2012); and the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens (2012). Valentine's work has also been included in a number of important group exhibitions that served to introduce the Light and Space artists to a national audience, including *Annual Sculpture Exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1966, 1968, 1970); *Sculpture Of The 60's*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1967); *Plastic Presence*, Jewish Museum, New York, Milwaukee Art Center, and San Francisco Art Museum (1969); *The Industrial Edge*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1969); and, more recently, *Primary Atmospheres: Works From California 1960-1970*, David Zwirner, New York (2010); *Pacific Standard Time: Crosscurrents In L.A. Painting And Sculpture, 1950-1970*, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and *Phenomenal: California Light, Space, Surface*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (2011).

Valentine's work can be found in numerous public and private collections, including Aldrich Museum of Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, New Mexico; Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Palo Alto; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Fine Art Museums of San Francisco; Honolulu Museum of Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Milwaukee Art Center; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, Poland; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, University of Utah, Logan; Norton Simon Museum of Art, Pasadena; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach; San Diego Museum of Art; Seattle Art Museum; University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Valentine lives and works in Los Angeles.

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