

DAVID KLEIN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
AL HELD, WATERCOLORS

June 20 – August 22, 2020

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 20, 12 – 6 PM, by appointment



Al Held, *Plaza 7*—1993, Watercolor on paper mounted on board, 49 x 67 inches

David Klein Gallery, 163 Townsend Street, Birmingham, Michigan is pleased to announce the opening of *AL HELD, WATERCOLORS*, June 20 – August 22, 2020. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, June 20th from 12-6 PM, by appointment. Please see below for details.

Al Held (1928-2005), already an established American abstract painter, started making watercolors in 1988 after he purchased a home in Camerata di Todi, Italy. The watercolors, with their intense color and pure geometry, are an intimate, contemporary response to the great 14th and 15th Century Renaissance paintings that surrounded him in Italy. Held used to speak of the “sheer sensuous joy” of pulling a wet brush across paper and his painting process was unique. He would wet the large sheets of paper first and then wrap the moist paper around a board attaching the edges to the board with staples. This is very similar to the way artists traditionally stretch a canvas, and it prevented the paper from warping or wrinkling. Held would apply layer over layer of wet color over dry, glazing and re-glazing, until he achieved the color and density he desired. By using this technique, he was able to create a richly stained surface of crystalline luminosity.

Al Held was a leading American abstract painter. Held had his first exhibition in New York City in 1956 and exhibited regularly until his death in 2005. His work in the 1950s, called Pigment Paintings, mirrored the work of many of the Abstract Expressionistic painters. By the 1960s he had developed his own visual language of hard-edges, geometric abstraction. Held was always dissatisfied with two-dimensional space and in his later work, he was able to masterfully create the illusion of depth and movement on a flat canvas. The lyrical geometry of the Luminous Constructs paintings anticipates the pulsing, impossible landscape of the virtual realm. They explore a space that seems to hail simultaneously from the art historical past and the digital future.

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Al Held, *Plaza 5* – 1993, Watercolor on paper mounted on board, 49 x 67 inches

Al Held's work is in many major museum collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. In 1974 Held had his first retrospective exhibition, curated by Marcia Tucker, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

For Appointments:

Please contact us at info@dkgallery.com or call 248-433-3700. Time slots are available in 1-hour increments, with a maximum of 4 visitors per hour.

Our priority is to ensure that your visit is as safe and enjoyable as possible. We request that all visitors wear masks and practice social distancing. All surfaces are cleaned and sanitized several times daily and hand sanitizer stations are provided the gallery.

For further information, please contact:

David Klein
info@dkgallery.com

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