

## ART + PRACTICE

### PRESS RELEASE

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## Art + Practice and The Baltimore Museum of Art Present *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*

*Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*

Art + Practice

April 22 - July 29, 2017

Public Opening Reception at Art + Practice: April 22, 2017 3 - 5 p.m.

Second Showing:

The Baltimore Museum of Art

October 18, 2017 - April 15, 2018



*I chose the spiral as a symbol of life's continuity. It became an overall wish for everyone.*

- Al Loving

**Los Angeles, CA; April 3, 2017** - Art + Practice (A+P) and The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will present a solo exhibition of artworks by artist **Al Loving** (b. 1935, Detroit, MI; d. 2005, New York, NY) at A+P in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. Co-curated by BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford and BMA Senior Programming and Research Curator Katy Siegel, the exhibition will be on view April 22 to July 29, 2017. Following this presentation, the exhibition will travel to BMA, where it will be on view October 18, 2017 to April 15, 2018.

For forty years, Loving experimented with materials and process to expand the definition of modern painting, drawing on everything from free jazz to his family's quilting tradition. In the 1980s, Loving broke free of the flat image, using heavy rag paper to make three-dimensional collages in brilliant colors. At A+P, *Spiral Play* will feature twelve of these collages, some of them monumental in scale. The work is radical, beautiful, and deeply human.

Loving was born in Detroit in 1935. He received his MFA at the University of Michigan, training in an Abstract Expressionist, gestural painting style. In 1968, Loving moved to New York City to engage in more active dialogue with his peers, and shifted to a hard-edge geometric mode. After less than a year in New York, he was offered a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which won critical acclaim. Despite his success, Loving felt trapped inside "the box" of geometric abstraction at a charged political moment—as if his art and his life were out of alignment. In the 1970s, he discovered a method of working with torn, dyed, and sewn canvas, drawing on quilting traditions, that rendered his paintings more vibrant and immediate. From the 1980s onward, Loving experimented with large scale collages that expanded into space, reconciling geometry and an expression of life force through profound and playful organic form.

"This collaboration between BMA and A+P represents an alignment of vision and ambition between two vastly different institutions at opposite ends of the country who share a conviction that art must be made accessible to the broadest demographic, specifically urban communities who are too often ignored by museums", said BMA Director Christopher Bedford. "The exhibitions we will undertake together intend to correct the 20th- and 21st-century canon, quite literally changing the face of that story, making it clear that art is a place of conversation and inclusion that can participate meaningfully in changing the world for the better," he added.

The BMA will be co-organizing four project-based exhibitions with A+P from 2017 to 2018. The exhibitions will be on view at A+P in Leimert Park and will travel to BMA in Baltimore, MD for their second showings. This collaboration marks A+P's second project-based collaboration with a museum institution, after A+P's inaugural project-based collaboration with the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University.

"Bedford has been a great supporter of A+P as well as a member of A+P's board of advisors. We are excited to work with him and Siegel to co-organize project-based exhibitions in Leimert for our community to access free museum-curated contemporary art," said A+P Executive Director Allan DiCastro. "We are also elated to bring the artistic caliber of artist Al Loving to the West Coast, Los Angeles and more specifically to the Leimert Park community," DiCastro explained.

The public opening reception for *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s* will take place at A+P, in Leimert Park, on April 22, 2017 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

#### **ABOUT AL LOVING**

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), and Marrakech Biennale 6 (2016, Morocco).

Loving's work is featured in the collections of major museums around the country, including: 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.

#### **CREDIT**

*Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s* is curated by Christopher Bedford, the Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art, and Katy Siegel, the Thaw Endowed Chair at Stony Brook University and Senior Curator at the Baltimore Museum of Art. This exhibition is presented by Art + Practice and The Baltimore Museum of Art.

Special thanks to the Estate of Al Loving and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

#### **ABOUT ART + PRACTICE**

Conceived and founded by artist Mark Bradford, philanthropist and collector Eileen Harris Norton, and community activist Allan DiCastro, Art + Practice (A+P) is an arts and education private operating foundation based in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. A+P's mandate is to create a developmental platform that, on one hand, supports the acquisition of practical skills for foster youth, and, on the other, stresses the importance of creative activity within a larger social context.

#### **A+P INFORMATION**

Admission to all exhibitions and public programs are free and available to the public.

To learn more visit [www.artandpractice.org](http://www.artandpractice.org).

Hours: Monday-Saturday 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. A+P is located at 3401 W. 43rd Place, Los Angeles, CA 90008. Ample metered and lot parking available.

### **ABOUT THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART**

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 95,000 objects—including the largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of American and European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts; works by established and emerging contemporary artists; significant artworks from China; stunning Antioch mosaics; and an exceptional collection of art from Africa. The BMA's galleries also showcase examples from one of the nation's finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs, and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped sculpture gardens. As a major cultural destination for the region, the BMA hosts a dynamic program of exhibitions, events, and educational programs throughout the year. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

### **BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART INFORMATION**

Admission to all exhibitions and programs are free. To learn more, visit [www.artbma.org](http://www.artbma.org).

Hours: Thursday - Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Saturday - Sunday: 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.,  
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **PRESS CONTACTS**

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### **ART + PRACTICE**

3401 W. 43rd Place  
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Monday - Sunday  
12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

[artandpractice.org](http://artandpractice.org)

### **PHOTO CREDIT**

Al Loving, *Humbird*, 1989. Mixed media on board, 72 x 100 inches. Courtesy of the Estate of Al Loving and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.