

# HOLLIS TAGGART

## Hollis Taggart Announces Exclusive Representation of Artist Knox Martin

### *Knox Martin: Radical Structures,* Solo Exhibition of Artist's Work on View Through June 1, 2019

Hollis Taggart announced today the exclusive representation of acclaimed artist Knox Martin, whose vibrant, abstract compositions bring together the visual vocabularies of Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, and Pop Art in a style all his own. Martin's paintings, from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as two new works from 2019, are currently on view at Hollis Taggart, in an exhibition titled *Knox Martin: Radical Structures*. The show captures Martin's intricate use of color, free-form gesture, and figural references, with important examples from the past and present. *Knox Martin: Radical Structures* will remain on view through June 1, 2019 at the gallery's primary space in Chelsea, at 521 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

After serving in WWII, Martin enrolled in the Art Students League of New York, where he studied from 1946 to 1950, alongside Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and Al Held, and later became an instructor. Despite the popularity of Abstract Expressionism, Martin's early work of the 1950s challenged the stylistic drippings and splatters of his contemporaries, and began the singular exploration of figures and objects that would become a fundamental part of his oeuvre. His vision earned him his first solo exhibition at the influential Charles Egan Gallery in 1954, and established him as a recognized member of New York's inner art and social circles of the time.

Influenced by the work of Cezanne, Goya, Matisse, Picasso, and de Kooning, Martin's early paintings were textural explorations, rendered predominantly in black and white and through the use of bold brushstrokes and geometric lines. In an early review, *The New York Times* categorized this work as containing a "particular intensity, both visceral and sensational." In the 1960s and 1970s, Martin began a thematic and aesthetic evolution, best exemplified through his newfound use of color and a growing interest in the female form, which he juxtaposed with geometric patterns and other organic shapes. As seen in *Woman with Folded Hands* (1973), *Reclining Woman* (1974), and *Carmen Seated* (1975), the female form is captured within the circular, rectangular, triangular, disked, and squared configurations of geometry, creating a sensation of the body being locked in a moment of stillness within the surface plane. Art critic Arthur Danto said of Martin's paintings, "[they] were animated by certain internal conversations on the meaning of space, surface, painting, pigment, reference, reality, and illusion."

These formal investigations and dialogues remain critical in Martin's most recent works, even as he has returned to a more restricted color palette. In one of his latest paintings, *U* (2019), on view at Hollis Taggart, Martin uses the sharp contrast of black against white to focus on abstract symbols, letters, and typography. It is the repetition of the letter "U", each character slightly tilted and unequal in scale, that creates a certain movement and vibration. There is a feeling of simplicity, but also of mathematical precision and complexity in Martin's new work. It is particularly the use of white space that is most striking, an absence that contains as much energy as the lettered forms themselves.

Martin describes the use of white in his paintings as essential, "everything that is art, white circulates around it. It is the small spaces in between that fluctuate and provide substance. Without white, there is nothing." He also emphasizes the intuitive and instinctive process that has shaped the abstract

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conception and vision of his career, “I never know where [the paintings] are going, they tell me what to do.”

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Born in Barranquilla, Colombia in 1923, Knox Martin moved to New York City in 1927. Since his first solo exhibition in 1954, solo exhibitions of Martin’s work have been presented widely both in the US and abroad, including in France, England, Switzerland, Canada, Spain, and Germany. His work has also been included in significant group presentations, such as *Some Paintings to Consider* (Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California, 1964), *Concrete Expressionism* (New York University, New York, 1965), *Large Scale American Paintings* (Jewish Museum, New York, 1967), the *Whitney Annual* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1967 and 1972), *Synthetic Realism* (Gremillion & Co. Fine Art Inc., Houston, 1986), *Knox Martin: A Painting Exhibition Spanning a Number of Years* (Lighthouse Museum, Tequesta, Florida, 1999), *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States* (Lowe Art Museum, Miami, 2013), and *The Masters: Art Student League Teachers and their Students* (The Art Students League of New York, 2018). Martin’s work is held in over 40 museums and private collections worldwide. He has received prestigious grants and awards, including most recently the Benjamin West Clinedinst Memorial Award and the French Legion of Honor. Martin has also led a distinguished career in teaching art, including his years at Yale Graduate School of the Arts, New York University, University of Minnesota, and The Art Students League of New York.

## About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart—formerly known as Hollis Taggart Galleries—presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such compelling artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider and Michael (Corinne) West. In summer 2015, the gallery moved its primary location from the Upper East Side to Chelsea. In fall 2018, it opened a newly renovated street-level location on W. 26th Street, a private viewing and storage annex across the street, and a project space at the High Line. With 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities.

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