

**November 4, 1927 – May 29, 2019**

Parrasch Heijnen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Franklin Parrasch Gallery, New York are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Tony DeLap at the age of 91. Born in Oakland, CA in 1927, DeLap's seventy year-plus career continuously embodied an energetic and singular approach to unconventional painting. A lifelong resident of California, and a fixture of the West Coast art scene, DeLap had an immeasurable impact on the course of contemporary art.

Immediately following appointments as Instructor of Fine Art and Design at California College of Arts and Crafts (1961-64) and then as Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at the University of California, Davis (1964-65), where he taught and mentored John McCracken (CAC) and Bruce Nauman (UCD), DeLap was recruited by *Artforum* cofounder John Coplans to join the new art department at University of California, Irvine as a founding faculty member. He remained at UCI through 1991, teaching alongside Larry Bell, Vija Celmins, Robert Irwin, Craig Kauffman and Barbara Rose, and mentored Chris Burden, Marcia Hafif, Alexis Smith and James Turrell, among others.

Spatial enigmas and the use of illusionism have been at the core of DeLap's practice since the beginning of his career. While his work shares visual similarities with Minimalism, Op-Art, and Constructivism, the artist's lifelong fascination with magic and sleight of hand (he received a Special Fellowship at the Academy of Magical Arts in 2017) greatly influenced the illusionistic qualities present in his art. DeLap's work, shape-shifting between painting and sculpture, defies fixed categorization with its tension and variety.

As a close friend and mentee of John McLaughlin, DeLap represented a generation of California artists who were transitioning from spiritual abstraction to conceptual and cerebral practices. Described as "emphatically geometric" by art historian Peter Frank, DeLap's work addresses how the interaction of flattened forms can create dimensionality and movement on static planes. As the art critic Christopher Knight noted, "Edges are a thing with DeLap. He wants to push you over them." DeLap literally pushed the edge, leading the viewer to peer around each piece and discover more.

DeLap exhibited extensively over the course of his career, beginning with a breakout exhibition at San Francisco's Dilexi Gallery in 1963. Following an introduction to New York art dealer Robert Elkon by their mutual friend Agnes Martin, DeLap began showing with Elkon Gallery on the Upper East Side in 1965, mounting ten exhibitions there over the course of 19 years. The artist went on to be represented by Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles. Parrasch Heijnen Gallery has represented Tony DeLap since 2015.

In his seminal 1965 essay 'Specific Objects,' Donald Judd discusses DeLap's work as exemplifying the tendency among artists in the 1960s to work in the space between painting and sculpture. His artwork played a key role in such landmark institutional shows as *The Responsive Eye* (1965: Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY), *Primary Structures* (1966: Jewish Museum, New York, NY) and *American Sculpture of the Sixties* (1967: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA).

DeLap's art resides in the permanent collections of Tate Modern (London, UK), Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, NY), Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA) and Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts (Lausanne, Switzerland) among many others.

Parrasch Heijnen Gallery presented DeLap at the 2017 edition of Art Basel with a solo stand of historic sculpture and works on paper from the 1960s and, in the same year, held a career survey concurrently with Franklin Parrasch Gallery.

In February 2018, the Laguna Museum of Art mounted a major retrospective of DeLap's work dating from 1961 to present, curated by Peter Frank and accompanied by a fully-illustrated publication.

It has been a tremendous honor to work with this visionary and true friend so closely over the last four years. Tony DeLap will be enormously missed. He is survived by his wife Kathy and their two children, Kelly DeLap Evans and Jack DeLap, and three grandchildren.

Tony DeLap was, for all of us who knew and loved him, pure magic.