MARTHA DIAMOND: DEEP TIME
November 17, 2024 to May 18, 2025

A five-decade survey comprised of paintings, works on paper, and monotypes

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present Deep Time, a traveling survey of five decades of work by Martha Diamond, marking the artist’s first solo museum presentation in thirty-six years. Martha Diamond: Deep Time will be on view at The Aldrich from November 17, 2024 to May 18, 2025, and will be accompanied by the artist’s first major monograph.

Diamond’s ties to The Aldrich extend back to 1972 when Larry Aldrich, the Museum’s founder, visited the artist’s Bowery studio and purchased the seven-by-six-foot acrylic on canvas painting, Untitled, 1972, marking her first museum acquisition. This painting was included in Diamond’s debut exhibition, Contemporary Reflections 1972-73, an annual series at the Museum that spotlighted emerging artists with no gallery representation. Aldrich bought another painting from Diamond a year later, Untitled, 1973. It would be included in three more exhibitions throughout the 1970s and 1980s at The Aldrich. Now in the Museum’s 60th anniversary year, Untitled, 1973 will make its return as the earliest work in Deep Time.

Diamond, who passed away in December 2023, is among the most perceptive painters of the last five decades. Her work’s formal concision and painterly bravado reflect an inner dialogue with generations of abstract artists, and the results are exceptional: an inimitable handling of gesture and space that reimagines the landscape tradition while deftly sliding between abstraction and representation. Encompassing paintings, works on paper, and monotypes, this focused survey of Diamond’s career proposes “deep time” as a new way of understanding her contribution to American painting.

Deep time is a concept used to explore thousands of years of human civilization and billions of years of planetary history. In conversation with ancient monuments and the modern skyscraper, the exhibition emphasizes Diamond’s commitment to capturing the emotional character of built space, tracking throughlines across mediums and methods to reveal a process that combines spirited experimentation with perceptive observation. Diamond’s relationship to the built landscape of New York was surely informed by her more than 50 years of residence in the city.
years spent maintaining her studio in the Bowery, demonstrating her tremendous perseverance as an artist and her rootedness in a single place over time.

The exhibition is accompanied by the artist’s first major monograph, an amply illustrated catalogue that includes an original essay by the exhibition’s co-curators, a chronology, and texts reprinted from some of Diamond’s most insightful critics: New York poets steeped in the visual arts. *Martha Diamond: Deep Time* documents the inspirations that converge in, and are transformed by, Diamond’s enigmatic and utterly original work.

*Martha Diamond: Deep Time* is co-organized by The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and the Colby College Museum of Art, and co-curated by The Aldrich’s Chief Curator, Amy Smith-Stewart and Colby’s Katz Consulting Curator, Levi Prombaum. The Colby College Museum of Art presentation is scheduled from July 13 to October 13, 2024.

Martha Diamond (1944-2023) received a BA from Carleton College in Minnesota in 1964 and, after a period of living abroad in Paris, an MA from New York University in 1969. She was an active participant in New York’s art and poetry scenes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her work has been shown at major New York galleries and institutions from the mid-1970s on, including solo exhibitions at Robert Miller Gallery, Brooke Alexander Gallery, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, and the New York Studio School, and important group shows at Skarstedt, the Hill Art Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She also had concurrent solo exhibitions in 1988 at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, and the Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Her work is in the permanent collections of numerous institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine; the Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine; the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Minneapolis Institute of Art; and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Her work was in the former collection of The Aldrich and was exhibited at the Museum in group exhibitions in 1973, 1974, 1985, and 1988. She is currently represented by David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles and New York.

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