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Allan D'Arcangelo: Some Propositions



Allan D'Arcangelo, *Proposition #20*, 1966, Acrylic on canvas, 40 1/8 x 40 1/8 inches

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Allan D'Arcangelo: Some Propositions*. Opening April 20, 2023, the exhibition features a selection of Allan D'Arcangelo's paintings, all made in the mid-1960s. The artist's career spanned half a century, but his powerful meditations on the nature of the built environment and its effects on the national psyche, painted in this brief period, remain his most iconic.

As America's Pop artists turned to the imagery of mass culture, celebrity, and advertising as microcosms of national psychology, sexuality, aspirations, and spirituality, D'Arcangelo took a more oblique approach, focusing instead on the iconography of the American road system.

In *Untitled* (1966), dislocated components hang in the rectangular canvas. An abstracted road gestures toward trees and greenery that blur, as if at high speed. The tree line seems to sail by, moving perpendicular to the road. Highway and

landscape comingle without respect to physics or perspective, like disjointed memories being stitched together after a long journey. The center of the canvas—the object of focus—is a blank white rectangle. Does its emptiness portray the undifferentiated, psychic irrelevance of the expanse that links the journey’s start and destination? Or does it suggest the irrelevance of the destination itself? The painting unavoidably modulates between the literal and symbolic.

America’s roads have, for decades, served as potent subjects for literature and music. Likewise, the broader category of landscape painting itself is one deeply intertwined with the history of art. Yet D’Arcangelo’s unusual approach still feels highly novel: highlighting the strange ways the contemporary landscape is abstracted and transformed into information to be processed by automobiles and their attendant drivers. Works like *Rear View Mirror in Aspen* (1967) and *Proposition #20* (1966) are packed with the surreal phenomenology of the road, with its hallucinatory blend of fatigue and ritualistic familiarity.

John Berger, in his critiques of paintings like *Thomas Gainsborough’s Mr and Mrs Andrews* (c 1748), drew attention to the inextricable link between European landscape painting and the proprietary attitudes of the continent’s landlord classes. In a similar way, the imagery D’Arcangelo explores comes straight out of American pragmatism. Roads race to infinity, instrumentalizing the horizon. The landscape’s topographical features—curves, bends, and bumps—are converted into symbolic warnings that populate D’Arcangelo’s works like the onomatopoeic exclamations of a Lichtenstein painting. America’s landscapes and road systems have always been richly symbolic, reflecting the country’s preoccupation with freedom, exploration, expansion, and domination. D’Arcangelo’s works embrace the subject’s monotony, optimism, and poetry.

Throughout his career, D’Arcangelo had solo-exhibitions at many prominent institutions, including: Fischbach Gallery (1963, 1964, 1965, 1967, and 1969, New York); Ileana Sonnabend Gallery (1965, Paris); Dwan Gallery (1966, Los Angeles); Marlborough Gallery (1971, 1975, New York); Institute of Contemporary Art (1971, Philadelphia); Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York (1978, Purchase); Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (1979, Richmond); Burchfield Center (1979, Buffalo); Grace Borgenicht Gallery (1982, New York); and Mitchell-Innes & Nash (2009, New York). In 2005, a retrospective of his work opened in Modena, Italy at the Palazzina dei Giardini.

D’Arcangelo’s paintings are featured in the collections of many museums, including: the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Art Institute of Chicago; Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Buffalo; Centre Georges Pompidou; Dallas Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; Museum of Modern Art; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; the Walker Art Center; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent the Estate of Allan D’Arcangelo.

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