

**Don Dudley: *New Work***

November 5—December 17, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 5, 6—8 pm

Level Two

Lower Level

Magenta Plains is pleased to present Don Dudley's third solo exhibition at the gallery. Spanning two levels, the exhibition displays the artist's newest shaped birch plywood paintings and paintings on paper made since 2020. For seven decades, Dudley has pursued color and shape through different modalities while remaining true to his specific minimalist style: emphasizing structure through asymmetry and spatial tension in pursuit of the sublime.

Delicately balancing his personal history as a bridge between east and west coast Minimalism, Dudley's newest work utilizes subtle gradients and a prismatic color palette alongside primary colors and hard-edged abstraction. The paintings on paper shatter the illusionistic space of the picture plane into multidimensions with exhaustive variety, while the birch plywood paintings expand beyond rectangular boundaries, incorporating diagonals and multi-paneled components painted in flat, absorbing colors.

Dudley takes a directly tactile approach to his artmaking; hand-cutting each piece of plywood and arranging it to emphasize subtle irregularities amidst a repetition of forms. Since his first use of aluminum in the 1960s, Dudley has crafted his particular aesthetic with additional found industrial materials such as soundproof fiberboard and corrugated metal, challenging traditional notions of painting. He often paints with solid, consistent shades while interspersing moments of softer, more translucent pigmentation to increase dimensionality. In Dudley's own words: "The motive has always been to express by the simplest means possible the richest variety of visual phenomena."

If the birch plywood paintings are confident statements of Dudley's aesthetic philosophy, his paintings on paper are thought experiments intended to push the boundaries of his artistic imagination. Working on paper, he generates spatial and color arrangements, eventually translating these configurations into three-dimensions. It is here that the artist's masterful understanding of color shines, as spectrums of luminescent chroma contour the geometric forms he hopes to later translate to plywood. In these works the legacy of his earlier artistic production is evident, calling to mind his mid-century line drawings of repeated prisms and "finish fetish" spray-lacquer prism paintings. Continuing what has been a decade-long examination of shape, color, surface, and systems, Dudley's lyrical new works are a celebration of form and material.

Born in Los Angeles, California in 1930, Don Dudley is a crucial, historical link between the optical and surface oriented “Cool School” or “Finish Fetish” generation of California artists who came into prominence in the 1960s and the more cerebral, Hard-edged Minimalist artists such as Frank Stella, Carmen Herrera and Ellsworth Kelly. Dudley’s practice embraces drawing and painting by way of sculpture and installation— creating subtle and sophisticated wall works that stand out for both their elegance and formal intelligence. Throughout Don Dudley’s seventy-year career he has challenged artistic conventions and the traditional concept of painting by incorporating industrial materials in his work such as aluminum, lacquer, homasote and plywood.

Dudley lived and worked on the West Coast for thirty-eight years before relocating to New York City in 1969. Settling first into a loft on Broome Street in SoHo, he later became one of the early pioneers in TriBeCa—where his studio remains to this day. The analytical artistic approaches in New York— especially the visual language of grids, modularity as well as the aesthetics of industrial manufacturing—had a profound impact on the artist and shifted his work away from the luscious opticality of the early works made in Southern California. He focused his attention on structure and seriality, solidifying a connection to artists such as Anne Truitt and Donald Judd.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Dudley explored modular and serial structures with monochromatic color schemes as well as site-specific spatial installations, exhibiting in “Corners” at MIT Vera List Art Center in 1979 and mounting solo shows at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in 1982 and New Museum of Contemporary Art in 1984. Select group exhibitions at major institutions include *Contemporary American Painting* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (1972); *Double Take* at New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY (1978); and *Activated Walls* at the Queens Museum of Art, New York, NY (1984).

After a twenty-five year hiatus from exhibiting, Dudley’s work was rediscovered in 2011 to great acclaim. Recent solo exhibitions include *Don Dudley: Early Work*, Magenta Plains, New York, NY (2019); *Don Dudley: Activated Walls and Recent Works*, Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne, DE (2018); *Don Dudley: Recent Work*, Magenta Plains, New York, NY (2017); *Modular Spaces*, Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne, DE (2013); *Don Dudley*, I-20 Gallery, New York, NY (2011); and *Don Dudley*, Mendes Wood, São Paulo, BR (2011).