



Clocktower Gives Away Entire Body of Work by Dale Henry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The Museum of Modern Art acquires major work by Dale Henry, as part of a 3-year giveaway project by Clocktower's Alanna Heiss

(December 27th, 2016 – New York, NY) The Museum of Modern Art has acquired *Primer Sets*, a 1972 serial work by post-minimalist painter Dale Henry, who bequeathed his entire body of work to Clocktower Founder & Director Alanna Heiss. The day of his death in September 2011, Henry wrote a letter giving all of his work and papers to Clocktower Heiss, with the proviso that the work remain outside of any commercial activity.



Dale Henry, *Primer Sets*, 1972
October 2013 installation at the Clocktower Gallery

Dale Henry (1931 – 2011) was a productive and respected artist in New York from the mid 1960's to the early 1980's. He showed in not-for-profit institutions that included the Clocktower Gallery and MoMA PS1 (then P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center) and in the well-regarded John Weber Gallery. He taught at the School of Visual Arts. Henry became disenchanted with the commercialization of the art world, and felt under-appreciated by critics, dealers, and even his peers. In 1986, he permanently left New York for the rural town of Cartersville, Virginia. For an artist not firmly established, to leave New York was to risk being forgotten, and this issue haunted Henry for the rest of his life. He unsuccessfully approached curators, including Alanna Heiss, and artist friends, including Robert and Sylvia Mangold and Marcia Hafif, to undertake responsibility for his work and his legacy.

Heiss received a final letter from Henry's lawyer, who had been given instructions to destroy the oeuvre, should Heiss decline the bequest. Heiss decided to take on this task after visiting Henry's studio in Virginia, and being reminded of the quality and peculiarity of the Henry's work. His peers, including Richard Nonas and Hafif, also remarked on the importance of the ideas and processes Henry was exploring in New York in the 1970's.

The result of that bequest was a three-part retrospective: *Dale Henry: The Artist Who Left New York*. Premiered at the Clocktower Gallery in Fall 2013—the last of the historic space’s forty years of non-commercial exhibitions—the exhibition traveled to Pioneer Works, Center for Art and Innovation in Red Hook, Brooklyn, in Spring 2014; and the final installment was on view at Clocktower’s administrative headquarters in on East 41st Street in the summer of 2014.

In keeping with Henry’s wishes, Heiss has given the most significant groups of works as gifts to museums and collections in the US and abroad, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum, the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, and the Sammlung-Hoffmann Collection in Berlin, among others. The goal is to bring forth seminal conceptual and post-minimalist works by an artist whose relative anonymity betrays the relevance of his work.



Details: *Primer Sets*, 1972
Acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in December 2016



Spring 2014 installation at Pioneer Works

The remaining 150 works are being given away to artists, friends, and peers. Works will be directed to Clocktower’s family of artists, ranging from 1970’s pioneers to the youngest participants in Clocktower’s most ambitious new projects; to the artist advisors, scholars, researchers, and installers who made the Dale Henry exhibitions come to fruition; to the friends and contemporaries of Henry’s whose artistic role in that period gave the project conceptual foundations; to partner institutions who have enabled the continuation of Clocktower operations after the 2013 relocation.

This project is directed by Associate Curator Beatrice Johnson. For more information, contact beatrice@clocktower.org.