

For Immediate Release

EDWARD TYLER NAHEM PRESENTS

PRIMACY: THE WASHINGTON COLOR SCHOOL

On View September 9, 2021 – October 23, 2021

Opening Reception: Thursday September 9, 2021 (6:00pm– 8:00pm)

(New York) – August 23, 2021 – Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art (ETNFA) is pleased to present ***Primacy: The Washington Color School***, an exhibition curated by Dexter Wimberly of paintings by nine eminent Washington Color School artists: **Cynthia Bickley-Green, Gene Davis, Sam Francis, Sam Gilliam, Morris Louis, Howard Mehring, Kenneth Noland, Alma Thomas, and Kenneth V. Young**. The origin of the Washington Color School is linked to a 1965 exhibition titled *The Washington Color Painters*, organized by Gerald Norland at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art in Washington D.C. Five of the six artists in the original 1965 Washington Color Painters exhibition are included in *Primacy*.

Artists of the Washington Color School are distinguished by their rejection of gesture in favor of flat, hard-edged planes of color, as seen in Gene Davis's adroitly executed *Red Dog* (ca. 1961) and Morris Louis's *Number 19* (1962), two works in the exhibition that create optical effects and showcase the transcendent potential of painting. Hung next to Howard Mehring's *Blue Note* (1964) and Kenneth Noland's *Untitled* (1965), these deceptively simple compositions radiate dynamism and tension.

In the vanguard of experimentation, the Washington Color School artists pushed boundaries with techniques and processes that would lead them to form individual but related styles, all of which emerged in reaction to Abstract Expressionism. This point of origin is clearly seen in the earliest work in the exhibition, *Study for Moby Dick* (1958) by Sam Francis, an artist associated with both the Abstract Expressionist movement and Post-Painterly Abstraction.

Inspired by acrylic paint's versatility, Washington Color School artists were among its earliest adopters, and they often applied it directly to raw, unprimed canvas. This approach yielded striking results in Cynthia Bickley-Green's expansive painting *Rolling Through* (1968) and Kenneth V. Young's *Fireball* (ca. 1968), a work that exemplifies Young's penchant for controlled chaos. The exhibition also includes Alma Thomas's *Untitled* (1968), a stunning example of her loosely painted yet meticulously constructed canvases, which she filled with lattices of bright color that create patterns from negative space.

The Washington Color School artists became known for their use of then innovative techniques, such as staining canvases with heavily diluted paint and pouring it across canvases placed on the floor. This intrepid approach is embodied in Sam Gilliam's *Patch* (1970), a work on draped canvas that required substantial amounts of water to thin the paint, which was then applied wet-on-wet so that the colors mixed together within the fibers of the canvas, leading to the diffuse, yet sumptuous appearance achieved here.

Primacy: The Washington Color School is accompanied by a publication, including text by Dexter Wimberly.

About The Curator

Dexter Wimberly is an American curator, based in Japan, who has organized exhibitions in galleries and institutions around the world including *A Fast, Moving Sky* at The Third Line in Dubai, UAE; *Derrick Adams: Sanctuary* at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City; *Kenneth Victor Young: Continuum* at American University Museum in Washington, DC; *Coffee, Rhum, Sugar & Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox* at The Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, CA; and *Vision & Spirit: African American Art | Works From The Bank Of America Collection* at The Harvey B. Gantt Center in Charlotte, NC. Wimberly's exhibitions have been reviewed and featured in publications including *The New York Times* and *Artforum* and have received support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The Kinkade Family Foundation. He is the co-founder of the financial literacy platforms Art World Conference and Art World Learning. Wimberly is also a Senior Critic at New York Academy of Art and the founder and director of the Hayama Artist Residency in Japan.

About Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery

Established in New York in 1985, Edward Tyler Nahem gallery is internationally recognized for exhibiting exceptional Modern, Post-war, and Contemporary art. Focusing on the secondary market, the gallery works with leading artists and estates, staging monographic and thematic exhibitions at its base on Madison Avenue, as well as art fairs globally.

Edward Tyler Nahem gallery works alongside private individuals, museums, and corporations to realize high-caliber collections focused on quality and longevity. Artists include El Anatsui, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cecily Brown, Alexander Calder, George Condo, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein, Joan Miró, Joan Mitchell, Claes Oldenburg, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter, Mark Rothko, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselmann, Christopher Wool, and Kenneth Victor Young.