

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart to Open *Harry Bertschmann: The 1950s* at its Project Space on March 7, 2019

Exhibition Provides New Look at Little-Known Abstract Expressionist Painter

On View through March 30, 2019

Opening Reception, March 7, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM

On March 7, Hollis Taggart will open *Harry Bertschmann: The 1950s*, an exhibition that sheds new light on the little-known Abstract Expressionist painter Harry Bertschmann. The exhibition will feature works from two of Bertschmann's early series, *The Magnolia Series* and *The Stuttgart Series*, both of which were last publicly on view more than sixty years ago. Inspired by the artist's travels in rural Iowa and his time spent serving at the U.S. Army base in Stuttgart, respectively, the two series capture Bertschmann's dynamic use of color and line to create sensations of texture and subtle shifts in light within the surface plane. Bertschmann has remained a prolific painter, continuing to produce new works today, with *The Magnolia* and *Stuttgart* series serving as the foundation of his artistic output over the last seven decades. *Harry Bertschmann: The 1950s* will be on view at Hollis Taggart's Project Space at 507 W. 27th Street through March 30, 2019.

Bertschmann attained success early in his career, with his paintings and drawings featured in wide range of solo and group exhibitions during the 1950s. In 1958, the jury of the prestigious Carnegie International selected him as its youngest exhibitor—and one of his large canvases hung beside those by Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, Philip Guston, and Robert Motherwell. During that decade he was represented by the Howard Wise Gallery in Cleveland and New York City, where in 1961 his solo exhibition followed one for Elaine de Kooning. After settling in Greenwich Village in 1962, however, Bertschmann began to drift from the gallery scene and to explore opportunities in graphic design.

Having trained at the famous Basel School of Design, Bertschmann quickly found success in developing commercial logos and packaging. Indeed, many well-recognized logos and package designs, including those for Kent and Newport cigarettes, Nestle's, and Bufferin, were created by Bertschmann. With his career in graphic design well established, Bertschmann became increasingly separated from the fine art circles of New York and other arts epicenters. Despite this, Bertschmann was resolute in painting every day. In 1997, the artist was honored with a retrospective in Basel, Switzerland—his home city. In June 2018, Bertschmann was honored with the rarely-bestowed Lifetime Achievement Award, given by the President of the Fashion Institute of Technology at commencement exercises at Radio City Music Hall.

The exhibition at Hollis Taggart provides a new opportunity to experience and re-examine the work of this gifted artist. It has been curated by Peter Hastings Falk, an art historian and the editor of the online magazine *Discoveries in American Art*. Professor Robert C. Morgan, an art historian and member of the Curatorial Board for *Discoveries in American Art*, described Bertschmann's vision as "abstract gestural signs that suggest a language." He added, "Bertschmann is essentially an art world outsider looking inward. He is a seasoned artist, a highly creative artist, an articulate individual, and a nearly obsessive worker—always willing to stand back and examine what he does before moving ahead. He is also an exemplary draughtsman...His atelier is a phenomenon to behold."

About Hollis Taggart

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Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart—formerly known as Hollis Taggart Galleries—presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such compelling artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider and Michael (Corinne) West. In summer 2015, the gallery moved its primary location from the Upper East Side to Chelsea. In fall 2018, it opened a newly renovated street-level location on W. 26th Street, a private viewing and storage annex across the street, and a project space at the High Line. With 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities.

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