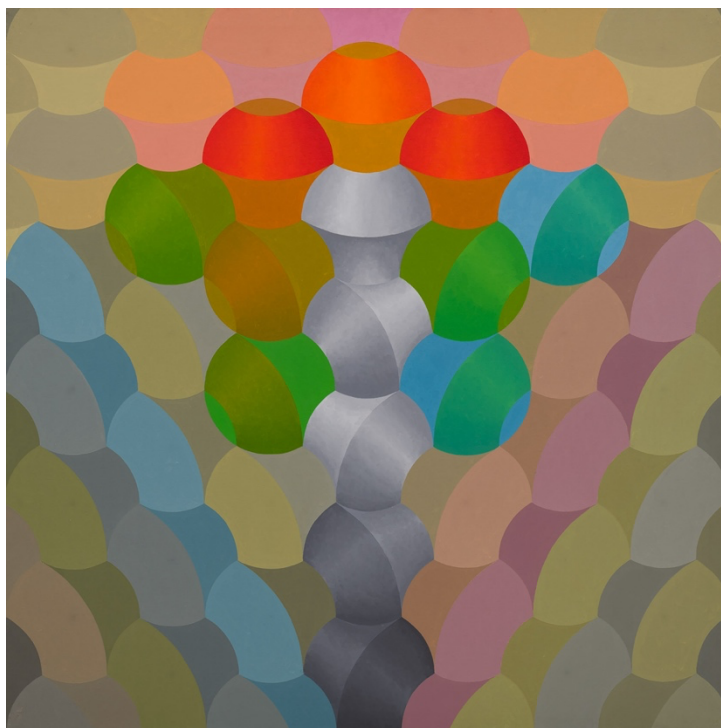


George Woodman:
A Democracy of Parts
Paintings 1966-1978

April 3 – May 3, 2025

Opening Reception:
April 3, 6-7:30 pm



Untitled, 1969. Acrylic on canvas, 48 ¼ x 48 ¼ inches

Woodman's art production of the 1960s and 70s, in particular, follows an intensely probative arc of experimentation, progression, and metamorphosis. From his initial embrace of pattern in the early 1960s, Woodman's investigation and analysis of its possibilities compelled him to transcend the canvas to occupy three-dimensional space in multiple fashions. In this period, Woodman developed a singular body of work that is defined in not only aesthetic but also deeply structural terms, informed by mathematical principles and an internationally inflected language of ornament and design.

- Rebecca Skafsgaard Lowery

DC Moore Gallery is pleased to present *George Woodman: A Democracy of Parts, Paintings 1966-1978*, its debut exhibition of George Woodman's work in collaboration with the Woodman Family Foundation. Focusing on geometric abstractions from a significant period within the artist's six-decade career, the exhibition traces the development of Woodman's singular approach to pattern. This exhibition marks the first time the artist's paintings from this period have been shown in New York since the 1980s.

In the 1960s, George Woodman began working with systematic pattern compositions, influenced by Minimalism as well as art and architecture studied during his travels to countries including Italy, Morocco, and Spain— a visit to study tiles at the Alhambra in 1965 proved to be pivotal. By the mid-1960s, Woodman's intellectually rigorous approach to pattern developed into tessellations—repeating, rotating, and reflecting shapes which fit together seamlessly to cover a canvas. Woodman saw these compositions as fundamentally anti-hierarchical, writing in 1978:

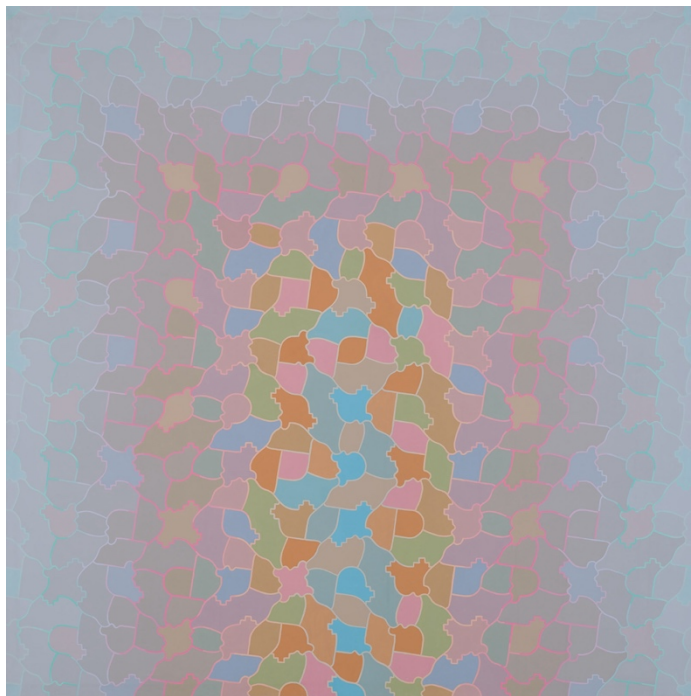
In contrast to looser types of pattern, tessellations suppress figure-ground relationships thus emphasizing part to part continuity in favor of part to whole relationships. In this democracy of

parts "composition" is sidestepped since the elements have no hierarchical relationship to each other, or a field, beyond their common participation in some combinatorial system which is in principle boundless in extension.

Although Woodman lived in Boulder, Colorado, during these years, his mathematically derived compositions were very much in dialogue with Minimalist painters in New York, such as Frank Stella and Sol LeWitt, who he frequently referenced in his writings. Woodman is also often associated with the New York-based Pattern & Decoration movement of the 1970s and 1980s. While he shared with those artists a deep interest in Islamic tile patterns, and a multitude of other decorative traditions, his relationship to pattern was primarily rooted in mathematical explorations.

Color plays no less significant a role than pattern in Woodman's paintings. Beginning in the mid-1960s, he integrated an idiosyncratic and sophisticated palette with form, often to heightened experiential and visual effects not unlike his Op Art contemporaries. In his paintings, shifts in color—both subtle and dramatic—redefine repeating shapes, adding perceptual dimensions to abstract compositions. "Woodman consistently regards color—and attendant tonality—as the element which makes the difference between empty, rote repetition and substantive and variegated visual experience," wrote critic and curator Peter Frank in the catalogue for *19 Artists – Emergent Americans* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1981, which included several of Woodman's paintings from this period.

His paintings were presented in numerous solo gallery exhibitions in both New York City and Colorado throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. In 1967, Woodman was awarded a fellowship in painting by the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition to the Guggenheim show, his paintings were included in other group exhibitions including *Patterning and Decoration* in 1977 at the Museum of the American Foundation for the Arts, Miami, curated by critic Amy Goldin. He often exhibited with and wrote for *Criss-Cross*—a group of Colorado-based pattern painters on whom he had been highly influential.



Grey Portal, 1978. Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 84 inches

George Woodman (1932-2017) was a painter, photographer and writer whose work is represented in museum collections internationally. His work has been presented in recent major international exhibitions including *Pattern, Decoration, and Crime*, Musée d'art Modern et Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland, and *Le Consortium*, Dijon, France, 2018; *Les Chemins du Sud*, Musée Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie, Serignan, France, 2019; and *Betty Woodman and George Woodman*, Charleston, Lewes, East Sussex, England.

An illustrated catalogue with an essay by Rebecca Skafsgaard Lowery, Curator of Exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts, accompanies the exhibition.

DC Moore Gallery specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am-6pm. For more information, photographs, or to arrange a viewing please call 212-247-2111 or email Caroline Magavern at cmagavern@dcmooregallery.com.