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HAMMER MUSEUM PRESENTS *CHARLES GAINES: GRIDWORK 1974-1989*

On view February 7 – May 24, 2015



(Los Angeles, CA)—The Hammer Museum presents *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989*, the first museum survey of the Los Angeles–based conceptual artist **Charles Gaines’s** early work. [On view February 7–May 24, 2015](#), the exhibition features eleven different series including **more than 80 works and relevant ephemera from the early years of Gaines’s career, which now spans over four decades.** He is highly regarded as both a leading practitioner of conceptual art and an influential educator—first at Fresno State University (now California State University, Fresno) and beginning in 1990 at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Gaines is celebrated primarily for his photographs, drawings, and works on paper that investigate systems, cognition, and language. *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989* traces Gaines’s career, from his groundbreaking work in the 1970s—some of which debuted in exhibitions at famed New York galleries Leo Castelli and John Weber—to his investigations of subjectivity in the late 1980s. The exhibition explores the ways in which Gaines’s early works on paper can be viewed as a crucial bridge between first generation conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s and the conceptually-based practices of artists who emerged in the ensuing decades incorporating identity politics, subjectivity, and inequality. *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989* includes **rare and never-before-seen works, some of which were presumed lost.** Organized by The Studio Museum in Harlem, the exhibition is curated by **Naima J. Keith**, associate curator. The Hammer’s presentation is organized by **Anne Ellegood**, senior curator, and **Jamillah James**, assistant curator.

“Charles Gaines is one of Los Angeles’s most treasured artists, a deeply committed teacher, and an influential mentor to many artists of younger generations,” says Ann Philbin, director of the Hammer Museum.

“*Gridwork* is an incredible opportunity to see works gathered together from a period in his career that was both formative and highly productive,” explains Anne Ellegood, senior curator. “In addition to producing rigorous, intelligent, and formally astute works for the past several decades, Gaines has influenced the careers of many artists that have exhibited at the Hammer or are part of our Hammer Contemporary Collection.”

Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989 comes at a moment of renewed discussion about conceptual and postminimalist art. The exhibition presents selections from eleven early series, including ***Regression (1973–74)***, one of Gaines’s first explorations of mathematical and numeric systems; ***Walnut Tree Orchard (1975–2014)*** and ***Faces (1978–79)***, which use photography as a foundation for graphic

deconstructions; *Motion: Trisha Brown Dance (1980–81)*, a collaboration with the world-renowned choreographer and dancer; and a series seen for the first time in the Hammer presentation, *Landscape: Assorted Trees with Regression (1981)*, which shows a critical connection between Gaines's work from the 1970s and his work from the 1980s. In each series he explores logic, pattern, linguistic systems and chance. Following a path set by influential composer and artist John Cage, Gaines finds poetry and the unexpected within prescribed processes.

Considered against the backdrop of the Black Arts Movement of the 1970s and the rise of multiculturalism in the 1980s, the works in *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989* are radical gestures. Eschewing overt discussion of race, they take a detached approach to identity that exemplifies Gaines's determination to transcend the conversations of his time and create new paths in artistic innovation.

In collaboration with *Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989*, the Hammer is partnering with the nonprofit organization Art + Practice (A+P) to present *Charles Gaines's Librettos: Manuel de Falla / Stokely Carmichael* at the A+P space in Leimert Park. Employing a systems-based conceptualism so central to Gaines's practice, the new 12-part body of work brings together the score of a tragic love story, the 1911 opera *La Vida Breve* by Spanish composer Manuel de Falla, and a fiery 1964 speech by the civil rights activist and Black Panther Party member Stokely Carmichael. The unexpected combination of music and text calls attention to the class issues at the center of the opera and foregrounds the long-standing class and race struggles in the United States while recognizing the power of music to bridge difference.

CATALOGUE

Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989 is accompanied by a 160-page, full-color hardcover catalogue that includes newly commissioned essays by leading scholars and curators in the field, an illustrated chronology contextualizing Gaines's life and work, and—for the first time—expository texts explaining the production process for each body of work. Contributors include **Naima J. Keith**; **Anne Ellegood**, senior curator, Hammer Museum; **Malik Gaines**, artist and professor of Combined Media, Hunter College; **Courtney J. Martin**, assistant professor, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Brown University; **Bennett Simpson**, senior curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; **Howard Singerman**, Phyllis and Joseph Carloff Chair of Art and Art History, Hunter College; and **Ellen Tani**, doctoral candidate in the Department of Art History, Stanford University. The publication, designed by **Kimberly Varella** of **Content Object**, Los Angeles, also features an introduction by **Thelma Golden** director and chief curator, The Studio Museum in Harlem; section introductions by **Abbe Schriber**; and an illustrated chronology by **Jamillah James**, assistant curator, Hammer Museum.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Exhibition Tours

Sunday, March 1, 2PM & 2:45PM

Anne Ellegood, senior curator, and **Jamillah James**, assistant curator, lead two walkthroughs of the exhibition with **Naima J. Keith**, associate curator, The Studio Museum in Harlem.

CREDIT

Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989 is organized by The Studio Museum in Harlem and curated by Naima J. Keith, associate curator. The Hammer's presentation is organized by Anne Ellegood, senior curator, and Jamillah James, assistant curator.

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The Hammer Museum's presentation is generously supported by Margo Leavin. Additional support is provided by Alisa and Kevin Ratner.

Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974-1989 is presented in conjunction with *Charles Gaines: Librettos: Manuel de Falla/Stokely Carmichael* at Art + Practice, a new art and social services non-profit in Leimert Park.

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ABOUT CHARLES GAINES

Charles Gaines (b. 1944) received his MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1967. Over the course of his career, he has been represented by Leo Castelli Gallery and John Weber Gallery, New York; Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles; Young Hoffman, Chicago; Richard Heller, San Francisco; and Galerie Lavignes-Bastille, Paris. He is currently represented by Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. In 2013, he received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and presented a critically acclaimed solo exhibition, *Notes on Social Justice*, at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. In 2012, Gaines was the subject of a mid-career survey at the Pomona College Museum of Art and the Pitzer College Art Gallery in Claremont, California. His works are in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Lentos Museum, Linz, Austria; Galerie der Stadt Esslingen, Esslingen, Germany; and Villa Merkel, Esslingen, Germany. Gaines's work has been featured in recent major group exhibitions including *Blues for Smoke* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2012) and *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980* (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2011). He has participated in the 2014 Montreal Biennial and the 2007 Venice Biennale, as well as group exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Lentos Museum; Deichtorhallen; Kunsthalle Basel; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; and REDCAT Gallery. Gaines has published several essays on contemporary art, including "Theater of Refusal: Black Art and Mainstream Criticism" (University of California, Irvine, 1993) and "The New Cosmopolitanism" (California State University, Fullerton, 2008). He currently resides in Los Angeles and has been full-time faculty in the School of Art at the California Institute of the Arts since 1989.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum at UCLA believes in the promise of art and ideas to illuminate lives and build a just world. Free to the public, the museum's collections, exhibitions, and programs span the classic to the contemporary in art, architecture, and design. As a cultural center, the Hammer Museum offers nearly 300 free public programs a year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances at the Billy Wilder Theater which also houses the UCLA Film & Television Archive. The Hammer's international exhibition program focuses on wide-ranging thematic and monographic exhibitions, highlighting contemporary art since the 1960s and the work of emerging artists through Hammer Projects and the Hammer's biennial, *Made in L.A.* The Hammer is home of the Armand Hammer Collection of American and European paintings, as well as the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection and the Hammer Contemporary Collection. The Hammer Contemporary Collection focuses on art of all media since 1960 with an emphasis on works of the last ten years, works on paper, and art made in Los Angeles. The museum also houses the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts—comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present—and oversees the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free and open to the public.

Visit www.hammer.ucla.edu for current exhibition and program information and call 310-443-7041 for tours.

Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11am–8pm, Saturday & Sunday 11am–5pm. Closed Mondays and national holidays. The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood, Los Angeles. Parking is available onsite for \$3 (maximum 3 hours) or for a \$3 flat rate after 6pm.