

THE DE LUXE SHOW

August 12–September 18, 2021

Art exists everywhere around us. The colors and shapes of paintings and sculptures are seen in our daily lives. The artists in this exhibition depict in their works the urge for complete exploration. These works carry a particular clarity: a window into a new art. Their art is honest and wide open, not burdened with gestures and other clichés. This art should be like the new world we're all striving toward, free of obstruction.

- Peter Bradley, "The Deluxe Show: Art Goes to the People." *Southwest Art Gallery Magazine*, September 1971, 14.

Parker Gallery and Karma are pleased to present a contemporary bicoastal tribute to *The De Luxe Show*, the landmark 1971 exhibition at the DeLUXE theater in Houston, in honor of its 50th anniversary. The show will be on view at Parker Gallery's Los Angeles space and Karma's 188 East 2nd Street location in New York.

The De Luxe Show was a milestone as one of the first racially integrated shows in the United States. The exhibition was curated by Peter Bradley with the backing of collector and philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil, and featured emerging and established abstract modern painters and sculptors of the time, including Darby Bannard, Peter Bradley, Anthony Caro, Dan Christensen, Ed Clark, Sam Gilliam, Robert Gordon, Richard Hunt, Virginia Jaramillo, Daniel Johnson, Craig Kauffman, Al Loving, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Larry Poons, Michael Steiner, William T. Williams, and James Wolfe. Parker Gallery and Karma will each display work by all of *The De Luxe Show*'s original artists. A selection of recent and historical works will be on view, including a number of pieces from the original 1971 exhibition.

Peter Bradley recognized an institutional preference for figurative works by Black American artists—particularly for imagery depicting narratives of struggle—and found that the bias othered Black artists and excluded them from contemporary art historical conversations. Bradley aimed to counter this curatorial oversimplification, and to promote inclusivity in non-figurative art movements. Bridget R. Cooks describes *The De Luxe Show* as "a conceptual project that was as much about freedom from the expectation of what art by black artists should look like, as the

freedom to make art without content and explore a phenomenological experience of the object.” The visionary show helped pave new avenues of recognition for marginalized artists, and was conceived with the belief that participation in genres should not be limited along racial lines.

A seminal example of Caro’s rejection of sculptural convention, *The Bull* (1970) is placed on the gallery floor rather than on a pedestal, encouraging the viewer to engage with the steel sculpture as an environmental feature rather than as an elevated art object. Sam Gilliam’s Beveled-Edge and Drape paintings, *Along* (1968) and *Drape* (1970), register his groundbreaking approach to painting as sculpture by modifying and removing the canvas from its stretcher bars. At nearly ten feet tall, Peter Bradley’s *Barbantum* (1972) is monolithic: its atmospheric washes of browns and blues are interrupted by thickly plastered acrylic paint. Titled with GPS coordinates of ancient cultural sites, Virginia Jaramillo’s recent “Site” paintings are comprised of planar shapes and muted tones. *Site: No. 12 38.4824° N, 22.5010° E* (2018) alludes to the ancient theater at Delphi, conceptually linking the architectural landmark to hard edge color field abstraction. Karma and Parker Gallery’s exhibition pays tribute to the pioneering legacies of the *De Luxe* artists, continuing the dialogue they started fifty years ago—one that remains relevant today.

The show will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue containing the works on display and installation views from the 1971 exhibition. The publication will also include texts from the 1971 catalogue, as well as a newly commissioned text by Amber Jamilla Musser and a text by Bridget R. Cooks that expands upon her 2013 essay in *Gulf Coast*.