

VAN DOREN WAXTER

For Immediate Release – April 2015
For information please call 212-445-0444

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present a solo exhibition

AI Held: *Particular Paradox*

May 6 – July 2, 2015

OPENING RECEPTION: MAY 6, 6-8PM



AI Held, *Particular Paradox 5*, 1999, Watercolor on paper mounted on board, 49 ¾ x 99 ½ in. (126.4 x 252.7 cm)
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Van Doren Waxter is pleased to announce AI Held: *Particular Paradox*, from a series by the same name, our first solo exhibition of watercolors by the artist since the gallery began representing the drawings and watercolors from the AI Held Foundation in 2014. The exhibition is on view May 6 - July 2, 2015 and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, including an essay by Barbara Rose.

AI Held was awarded a residency at the American Academy in Rome in 1981, an experience that would greatly influence his life and work from that point forward. Taken with Italy's Baroque architecture and Renaissance frescos, Held began studying Italian masters including Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Luca Signorelli, and Michelangelo. Beginning in the nineties, he split his time between a home in Camerata di Todi, Italy and his home in Boiceville, New York. Barbara Rose notes in her introductory essay: "...Held [...] believed that paradox and contradiction, and conflict and harmony, could be reconciled through human will." In his Camerata studio, immersing himself in the newly found inspirations, Held worked laboriously in tackling the reconciliation he had been searching for throughout his career. In Italy, Held worked primarily in watercolor, a medium he liked because of its immediacy, fluidity and the directness it gave him. Held's visions offer an unmoored vantage point, conceiving of perspectives that are illusive and imaginary through the manipulation of basic geometric objects within often contradictory and converging planes. While the watercolors he made in Italy influenced the immense paintings he produced in his Boiceville studio, Held considered his watercolors to be a separate completed body of work.

AI Held (1928-2005) was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in the Bronx. As a young man, he enlisted in the Navy (1945-47), enrolling in the Art Students League in New York City after his service. Under the GI Bill, he studied at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris (1949-53). Returning to the United States in 1953, Held worked in Abstract Expressionism, creating the *Taxi Cab* series (late 1950's) and the *Alphabet Paintings* (c. 1961-67). In 1962, he became a professor at Yale School of Art, where he would continue to teach until 1980. In the mid 1960's, Held moved away from flatness and frontality; in 1967 he began painting exclusively in black and white, exploring shifting perspectives and odd spatial conundrums in his work, going against Greenbergian flatness and returning to using color in his paintings in 1978. Held's first New York solo exhibition was at the Poindexter Gallery in 1959. He completed many public commissions during his lifetime including: *Order/Disorder/Ascension/ Descension*, a mural at the Social Security Mid-Atlantic Program Center in Philadelphia, PA (1976), *Gravity's Rainbow*, a stained glass window commissioned for Ronald Reagan National Airport in Washington D.C. (1996), and the glass mosaic, *Passing Through*, installed at the 53rd Street/Lexington Avenue Subway Station in New York City (2003). Held's work can be found in the collections of major museum including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, Tate Gallery in London, Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, and the Kunsthaus Zurich.

For more information please visit vandorenwaxter.com.

Van Doren Waxter is located at 23 East 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021.

Gallery Hours through May 23: Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm; after May 25: Monday through Friday, 10am - 5pm.