



Leslie Hewitt and Jamal Cyrus, *For Solo Hammond B3 Organ, Double Contrabass Flute, or Tambourine (This Score May Be Realized in Any Imaginative Way...)*, 2024. Wall Sculpture. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

LESLIE HEWITT *NEW WAVES*

November 16, 2024 – January 25, 2025

Perrotin Los Angeles is pleased to announce artist Leslie Hewitt's solo presentation *New Waves*, opening on Saturday, November 16, 2024, and remaining on view through January 25, 2025. *New Waves* is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with Perrotin and her first at the gallery's Los Angeles location.

Leslie Hewitt's photographs turn our perceptual assumptions about viewing upside down—or perhaps more accurately, they quite literally ground perception with the force of gravity. In her self-described still life photographs, a series Hewitt has been making since 2004, chromogenic prints rest inside of custom-made frames, which are placed on the floor and leaned against a wall. Encountering these works requires a full body act of looking, a physical experience that slows down perception.

Gravity, and a slowing of perception, also come into play within the depicted space of Hewitt's photographs. If concepts like *floor*, and *lean*, are central to the artworks as physical objects, they also figure

prominently within the still life scenes Hewitt presents us with. In *Untitled (Maddened by Love)*, 2019, for example, a neatly stacked pile of five books rests on the floor, pushed up against a wall. On top of this stack of books is placed a rectangular—just slightly wide of square—plank of elm wood, its flat surface facing us as it leans against the wall of the space within the photograph. The gravity and lean that govern Hewitt's artwork-as-object are repeated by the gravity and lean of the wooden plank—a subtle play on the visual and literary device of *mise-en-abyme* (literal translation: “placed into the abyss”), of an image within an image. In *Untitled (Maddened by Love)* there is yet another image within an image, a photo placed carefully at the top of the wood plank and stacked books arrangement. One can just make out what appears to be three figures set against an expanse of sky and sea, an anonymous snapshot marking a moment in place and time.

What should we make of the unadorned surface of the not-quite-blank wood plane (the striations of wood grain becoming their own surface



Leslie Hewitt, *Untitled (Imperceptible, Slow Drag, Barely Moving)*, 2022. Hot rolled steel, red oak, inherited glass objects. 30.5 × 487.7 × 243.8 cm | 12 × 192 × 96 in. Photo: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

feature), the representation of books in a kind of stasis, their printed spines both turned and at times rendered legible, and the suggestive unknowability of other elements that appear in Hewitt's still lifes? As the artist herself has cogently described, her spare still life arrangements are in conceptual dialogue with the fraught legacy of 17th-century Dutch still life painting, where abundance was deliberately put on view. Hewitt's compositions, so beautifully spare in composition, remove the conspicuous spoils of colonial trade (rare flowers, exotic foods, precious materials) and replace them with a different kind of abundance—a generosity of critical and emotional space for interpretation; an abundance of possibility to create new meaning.

This possibility of new meanings underlies the title of Hewitt's exhibition, *New Waves*. For her presentation at Perrotin Los Angeles, Hewitt presents her still life photographs alongside two additional works: a floor sculpture, *Untitled (Imperceptible, Slow Drag, Barely Moving)*, 2022, and a work made in collaboration with Jamal Cyrus that nods to the Fluxus legacy of Benjamin Patterson, a sculpture whose title functions as an event score: *For Solo Hammond B3 Organ, Double Contrabass Flute, or Tambourine (This Score May Be Realized in Any Imaginative*

Way, or in conjunction with or in response to the recording of the song Rock Steady 00:03:15 on the album Young Gifted and Black, Atlantic Records (1972) with Aretha Franklin on lead vocals and piano, Donny Hathaway on electric piano and organ, Bernard Purdie on drums, Cornell Dupree on guitar, Richard Tee on organ, Chuck Rainey on bass guitar, The Sweethearts of Soul (Brenda Bryand, Margaret Branch, Pat Smith) as backing vocals, Robert Popwell as percussionist, Dr. John as percussionist, and the Memphis Horns (Wayne Jackson on Trumpet, Andrew Love on Tenor Saxophone), 2024. Like Hewitt's still life photographs, both works incorporate an open-endedness that relies upon the viewer to complete a circuit of interpretation. In the former, we see the partial outline of a domestic space, based on blueprints, that pays homage to the lost outlines of everyday spaces and ancestral sites submerged by systematic oppression, eminent domain, and other forces often collapsing within anti-blackness. In the score, the perceptual associations of the work's title, and the cast bronze seashell and tambourine, rely on the synaesthetic powers of its viewers to intermingle linguistic, visual, and aural registers—to call to mind sounds based on what they read and see.



Leslie Hewitt, *Untitled (Maddened by Love)*, 2019. Digital chromogenic print in custom elm frame. 133 × 158 × 18 cm | 52 ³/₈ × 62 ³/₁₆ × 7 ¹/₁₆ in. Photo: Guillaume Zicarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

Coming back to Hewitt's title, *New Waves*, I take my cue from the artist to suggest that there is a conceptual physics at play in the convergence of these multiple bodies of work. Much like the reaction that occurs when atoms crash into each other, Hewitt's colliding bodies of work generate their own transfer of energy: waves that reverberate through space and time, and into the future.

Hewitt studied at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, the Yale University School of Art, and at New York University, where she was a Clark Fellow in the Africana and Visual Culture Studies programs. Among her many accolades, she was a recipient of The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship in 2020 and the Anonymous Was A Woman award in 2022. Recent exhibitions include the Dia Art Foundation, the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Studio Museum in Harlem; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York; The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; Project Row Houses in Houston; and LA><ART in Los Angeles.

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