

CHARLES HINMAN: GEMS

Curated by James Cavello

Exhibition Dates
September 11 – November 7, 2026

Westwood Gallery NYC is honored to present *Charles Hinman: Gems*, the first exhibition dedicated to the artist's final series following his death in May 2026. Bringing together sculptural shaped canvases created between 2000 and 2014 in his Bowery loft, the exhibition reveals how Hinman distilled more than six decades of inquiry into form, color, light, and space into a body of work with extraordinary clarity and innovation within the closing years of his career.

The presentation of *Gems* follows *Artists on the Bowery, Part 6: Reframing the Edge*, Hinman's final lifetime exhibition in Westwood Gallery NYC in 2026. While that exhibition situated his work within the rich artistic history of the Bowery, *Gems* focuses exclusively on the artist's last series, offering an opportunity to consider the remarkable refinement achieved at the conclusion of his career.

Charles Hinman fundamentally transformed the language of painting. Beginning in the early 1960s, he pioneered the shaped canvas, rejecting the traditional rectangular support in favor of constructed forms that projected into the viewer's space. Unlike relief sculpture, however, Hinman's works never abandoned painting. Color, shadow, and geometry remained inseparable, producing compositions in which actual form and optical illusion exist in constant dialogue. His work challenged the boundaries between painting and sculpture while maintaining a singular commitment to abstraction.

Created in his Bowery loft between 2000 and 2014, the *Gems* series distills the essential concerns that occupied Hinman throughout his career. Angular planes, faceted geometries, and radiant color combine to produce compositions that appear simultaneously solid and weightless. The paintings project from the wall with sculptural presence while their carefully calibrated surfaces dissolve into shifting perceptions of depth, movement, and light. At once architectural and lyrical, these forms reveal an artist whose visual language had reached an extraordinary state of precision and economy.

Rather than representing a departure from Hinman's earlier innovations, the *Gems* series reveals the maturation of ideas first explored decades earlier. The structural inventiveness of his landmark shaped canvases of the 1960s, the rhythmic geometries of the 1970s, and the soaring arcs of the 1980s find a distilled expression in these final works. Each interaction of angle, contour, and color manifests a lifetime of formal inquiry, resulting in paintings of remarkable confidence, balance, and luminosity.

The Bowery studio in which these works were created occupies an important place in the history of postwar American art. Hinman lived and worked at 231A Bowery for more than fifty years, having joined a community of artists whose studios contributed to the neighborhood's emergence as one of New York's most significant artistic centers. The *Gems* paintings were conceived within this historic space, bringing Hinman's lifelong exploration of shaped painting to its fullest realization.

The first exhibition devoted exclusively to Hinman's *Gems* was held at the Butler Institute of American Art in 2011, before the series was completed. Fifteen years later, *Charles Hinman: Gems* offers a rare opportunity to experience the culmination of his pioneering artistic practice. These works affirm Hinman's enduring belief that painting could continually reinvent itself through the dynamic interplay of structure, color, and perception. Together, they stand as the concluding chapter of one of the most significant and sustained investigations into shaped painting in the history of American abstraction.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Charles Hinman (1932–2026) was an American artist whose pioneering shaped canvases redefined the relationship between painting and sculpture. Over a career spanning more than six decades, he developed an unmistakable visual language grounded in geometry, color, and architectural form. Born in Syracuse, New York, Hinman received his B.F.A. from Syracuse University before establishing his studio in New York during the formative years of postwar abstraction. From his groundbreaking constructions of the early 1960s to the luminous *Gems* series completed in his Bowery studio, his work remained dedicated to expanding the expressive and spatial possibilities of painting.

Following his debut in *Seven New Artists* at Sidney Janis Gallery in 1964, Hinman's paintings entered major museum collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, which acquired *Poltergeist* (1964) shortly after its completion, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Today his work is represented in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Denver Art Museum, the Kreeger Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and numerous other institutions in the United States and abroad. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and four Pollock-Krasner Foundation grants, and his work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions and scholarly publications. His most recent museum retrospective was presented by the Kreeger Museum, Washington, DC, in 2019.

Westwood Gallery NYC serves as trustee of the Charles Hinman Trust and Archive and is committed to advancing scholarship on the artist while preserving and promoting his enduring legacy.

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