

# TOM WUDL WORKS FROM 1971-1979

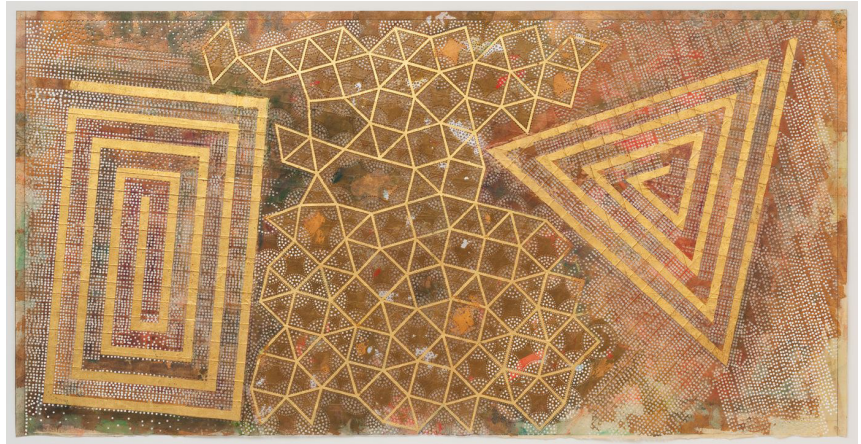
24 January – 3 March 2012

Opening reception for the artist: Tuesday 24 January, 6-8 p.m.\*

\* Please note this is a special Tuesday opening

Venice, CA – L.A. Louver is pleased to present an exhibition of work from the groundbreaking decade of Tom Wudl's career: the 1970s. **Tom Wudl: Works from 1971-1979** includes ten paintings, of which the seminal *Verde*, 1972, has been generously loaned by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Wudl created his abstractions with handmade rice paper, which he pierced with innumerable punches of varying size, forming patterns with the perforations. Incorporating acrylic paint and gold leaf, and the occasional use of found newsprint (such as in *Untitled*, 1973), striking, sumptuous colors and geometric shapes are the hallmarks of these works. Motifs allude to the mystical and spiritual, as well as the natural world, and compositions are enigmatic. Most paintings are untitled, with a rare exception in the aforementioned *Verde*, from the Spanish (the artist's first language) meaning verdant or green, and perhaps a reference to Wudl's own artistic coming of age. Also, *Homage to Buckminster Fuller*, 1973-1975, is distinguished by patterning inspired by the work of the renowned system theorist and designer of the geodesic dome, and whose ideas were a primary influence on Wudl in this early stage of his career.



Tom Wudl. *Untitled*, 1982, acrylic and gold leaf on paper punch, 48 x 84 in. (121.92 x 213.36 cm)

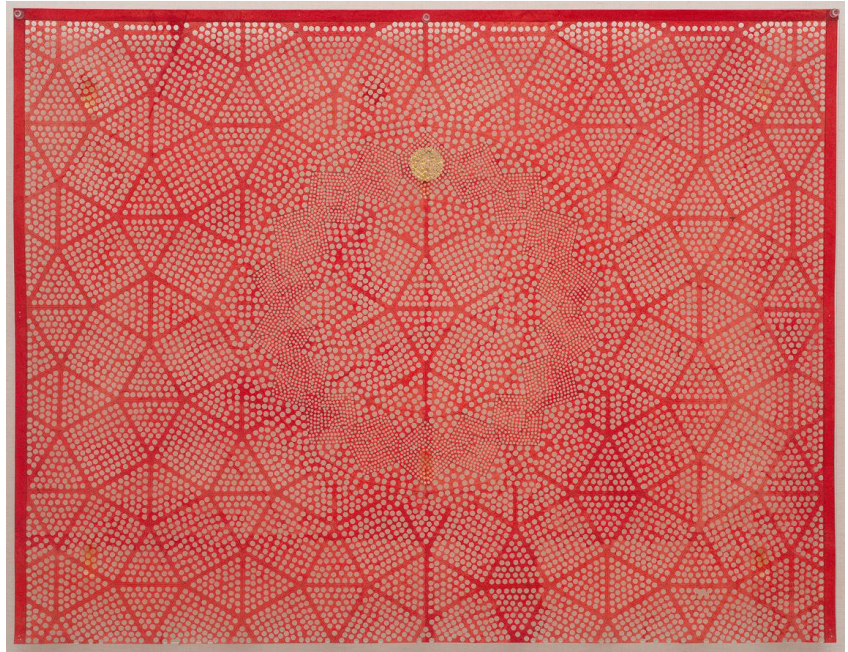
With the dawn of the 1970s, Wudl aimed to reconcile his interest in figuration with the doctrine of abstraction, by pursuing a course deliberately antithetical to the reductive Modernist theories of artists such as Donald Judd and Robert Morris. While Wudl's work from this period has been frequently identified with the "Pattern and Decoration" or "P&D" movement active on both U.S. coasts from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, the genesis of Wudl's paintings predated the movement by more than five years. Considered by some observers to be a reaction to Minimalism (although in common with Minimalism it retained a flattening grid), "P&D" sought to obliterate the distinction between art and decoration. Abstraction is its form, beauty is implicit, and ornament is an end in itself. The philosopher and writer Arthur Danto has argued that this decoration was situated "somewhere between figuration and abstraction and encompassed almost the entire visual culture of many non-western traditions." Furthermore, the movement itself was an early step into a globalist aesthetic. *New York Times* art critic Holland Cotter has described it as the first and only art movement of the postmodern era. Indeed, while Wudl did not formally embrace the movement, his work certainly embodies its theoretical underpinnings: it is non-referential, non-hierarchical, lacks irony, and is deeply aware of the universe of cultures beyond a Euro-American horizon.

Tom Wudl: *Works from 1971-1979* is part of L.A. Louver's exhibition programming presented in conjunction with the Getty initiative Pacific Standard Time.

Tom Wudl's *Untitled*, 1973 was recently seen in *California Art: Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation*, at The Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, 27 August through 4 December 2011, presented in conjunction with Pacific Standard Time.

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In 1958, Tom Wudl immigrated to the United States from Cochabamba, Bolivia. Aged ten, Wudl already knew he wanted to become an artist. Immediately following high school, he enrolled at Chouinard Art Institute, which gave him both a classical training in art, and the freedom to hone his drawing skills. Wudl also immersed himself in art history, developing a passion for late Medieval art (especially Northern European) and early Italian Renaissance painting through private study and while traveling in Europe.



Tom Wudl, *Homage to Buckminster Fuller*, 1973-1975  
acrylic and gold leaf on paper punch  
28 x 37 in. (71.1 x 94 cm)

Wudl has combined making art with a long career in teaching, and has held positions at Art Center College of Art & Design, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, Claremont College and Otis College of Art and Design. He has exhibited his work in museums and galleries in the United States, Europe and Asia, including the 1972 Documenta V, Kassel; Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo; Nagoya City Museum; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Art; Pasadena Art Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

L.A. Louver has represented Tom Wudl since 1980. **Tom Wudl: Works from 1971-1979** tells the story of Wudl's art that immediately preceded our involvement, and presaged the success of ten solo gallery exhibitions we have presented over the past two decades.

*Concurrently on view in L.A. Louver's first floor galleries:*

***Kienholz before LACMA.*** An exhibition of rare works from 1957-1964 by Ed Kienholz (1927-1994) that predate his landmark and controversial 1966 retrospective at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. This exhibition is presented in collaboration with Maurice Tuchman and is accompanied by a full-color publication, with an essay by Tuchman and foreword by Peter Goulds.