

VAN DOREN  
WAXTER

**Alan Shields**

May 12 – June 30, 2023

3rd Floor Gallery



Alan Shields, *Untitled*, c. 1984

Acrylic, thread and string on HMP paper, 13 x 12 1/2 in (33 x 31.8 cm)

Van Doren Waxter is delighted to present a suite of newly discovered works on paper by visionary American artist Alan Shields (1944 - 2005), on view from May 12 through June 30, 2023 at 23 East 73rd Street. Acclaimed for his distinctively polychromatic oeuvre of unconventional, unusual mixed media works, in saturated colors and optical richness, spanning sculpture, collages, free-hanging constructions, painting, installation, and printmaking, the exhibition will highlight Shields' robust body of works on paper. The eighteen works on paper, made between 1984 and 2001, have never been shown or reproduced and illustrate his singular approach to artmaking. This is Van Doren Waxter's seventh exhibition of the artist.

The paper Shields used was handmade at Tyler Graphics Ltd., Bedford Village, New York. By adding pigment to the pulp of the paper, the artist was able to incorporate vibrant fields of color. As each work was created, colors continue to overlap through applications of acrylic paint, thread, and asymmetrical layers of paper, formal elements consistent throughout Shields' idiosyncratic, kaleidoscopic art practice. In a 1977 interview with American art curator Kathy Halbreich, Shields addressed the intrigue of working on handmade paper:

By controlling the making of paper—what it’s made of—you get to control what you do on it or with it later. I haven’t even fully realized the possibilities of paper, and that is one of the things that intrigues me about continuing it. So far, paper has treated me real well, and I’ve gotten some good things out of it.

Alan Shields has been included in a wide range of recent museum exhibitions, including *Making Knowing: Art in Craft 1950-2019* (2019-2022) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY *With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985* at Museum of Contemporary Art, LA (2019-2020, traveling); *Artistic License: Six Takes on the Guggenheim Collection* at the Guggenheim Museum, NY (2019-2020); and *Outliers and American Vanguard Art* at National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2018-2019, traveled). Recent solo exhibitions focused on the work of Alan Shields have included *Alan Shields: Protracted Simplicity*, a survey accompanied by a chronological monograph by Heidi Zuckerman at the Aspen Art Museum (2016); *Alan Shields: A Different Kind of Painting* at Beeler Gallery at Columbus College of Art & Design (2017-18); and *Alan Shields: Common Threads* at the Parrish Art Museum (2018).

**Gallery Information**

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