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Anne Truitt Exhibition Celebrates the Career of Leading Minimal Artist at National Gallery of Art, November 19, 2017–April 1, 2018



Anne Truitt
Knight's Heritage, 1963
acrylic on wood
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Collectors Committee

Washington, DC—The studio life of Anne Truitt (1921–2004) is explored in the focus exhibition *In the Tower: Anne Truitt*, on view in the East Building, Tower 3, from November 19, 2017, through April 1, 2018. The first major presentation of Truitt's work at the Gallery, the exhibition celebrates the museum's acquisition of several major artworks by Truitt in recent years, including seminal works from the collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art as well as several outstanding loans. Bringing together nine sculptures, two paintings, and 12 works on paper representing the different media in which the artist worked, the exhibition traces Truitt's artistic development from 1961 to 2002.

One of the most original and important sculptors to emerge in the United States during the 1960s, Truitt is unique in the field of minimal art. Whereas artists such as Donald Judd (1928–1994) and Carl Andre (b. 1935) enlisted industrial fabrication and materials to make their works, Truitt hand-painted her sculptures in multiple layers to create abstract compositions of subtle color in three dimensions. Her art is infused with memory and feeling, unlike much minimalist art, and while most of her peers were based in New York or Los Angeles, she worked alone and independently in Washington, DC. Beginning in 1960 she developed a unique body of work in a series of studio spaces in the Georgetown, Dupont Circle, Adams Morgan, and Cleveland Park neighborhoods, and for a brief period had a studio in Tokyo, where she lived from 1964 to 1967.

"This exhibition celebrates the career of this unique and important artist, who lived and worked in Washington, DC," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The National Gallery of Art has acquired one of the most significant groups of works by Anne Truitt in a public museum. We are grateful for the generosity of the donors and lenders to this exhibition, as well as for acquisitions from the Corcoran Gallery of Art that have enriched the Gallery's collection of Truitt's art."

Organization and Support

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation.

The exhibition is made possible by The Tower Project of the National Gallery of Art.

Exhibition Highlights

Truitt's sculptures draw on memories of her childhood and other episodes from her life, as well as historical and literary sources. At more than eight feet tall, *Insurrection* (1962) is one of the most important works from Truitt's breakthrough period (1962–1963), when the artist had a studio in Twining Court, an alley near Dupont Circle. The sculpture is divided slightly off center, from top to base, in two shades of red. Another early work, *Knight's Heritage* (1963), eschews the base, resting directly on the floor. Grooves in the wood mark its three divisions, with the artist's visible brushstrokes defining the painted surface in black, yellow, and crimson.

Flower (1969) is one of the artist's columnar works, a form she explored for almost four decades. Referring to a stage in a plant's development, it is part of a series of works that allegorize the stages of erotic love. This sculpture's refined surface and ethereal color are the result of a process of applying and sanding multiple coats of paint, a technique adopted by Truitt during the late 1960s. The matched columns *Mid-Day* (1972) and *Spume* (1972), both 10 feet high, are among the tallest works Truitt ever made and were completed in a studio that the artist built behind her house in Cleveland Park in 1971. At six and a half feet tall but just eight inches wide, *Summer Remembered* (1981) exemplifies the tapered columnar format of Truitt's later work, while *Parva XII* (1977) is one of a series of delicately proportioned works titled after a Greek word meaning "small thing." *Twining Court II* (2002) was completed near the end of Truitt's career. Named for her first sculpture studio, this black column alludes to the somber palette of her early work and to the seminal period of her life in Washington from 1962 to 1963.

The exhibition also includes the paintings *Sand Morning* (1973) and *Arundel XI* (1974), as well as a series of black and violet acrylic works on paper, two of which Truitt made in a rented room in Georgetown in 1962; an acrylic on paper made in her studio in Tokyo in 1966; two acrylics on paper completed on Tilden Street in 1968; several early drawings of streetscapes and buildings recalled from childhood; and a rare working drawing for the Gallery's sculpture *Knight's Heritage*.

Anne Truitt (1921–2004)

Born in 1921 in Baltimore, MD, Truitt grew up in Easton, MD, and was educated at Bryn Mawr College. After living in Boston, Dallas, and San Francisco, she settled in Washington, DC. Truitt's one-person show at André Emmerich Gallery in 1963 was one of the first exhibitions of minimal-type sculpture; her work was included in "Black, White, and Grey" (1964) and "Primary Structures" (1966), the defining exhibitions of the minimalist tendency. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation (1970) and the National Endowment for the Arts (1971 and 1977), Truitt was also a professor at the University of Maryland at College Park (1975–1996) and the acting director of Yaddo (an artists' working community in Saratoga Springs, NY) in 1984. Major presentations of Truitt's work have appeared at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1973), the Corcoran Gallery of Art (1974), the Baltimore Museum of Art (1992), the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2009), and the Dia Art Foundation (2017). Honored with several honorary doctorates, Truitt was awarded the Willa S. Cather Medal by the University of Nebraska in 2003.

Curator and Related Activities

The exhibition is curated by James Meyer, curator of art, 1945–1974, National Gallery of Art.

Lecture

Anne Truitt in Washington: A Conversation with James Meyer and Alexandra Truitt

November 19, 12:00

East Building Auditorium

Alexandra Truitt, the artist's daughter, independent photo editor and picture researcher, and manager of the Estate of Anne Truitt, in conversation with James Meyer, curator of art, 1945–1974, National Gallery of Art.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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