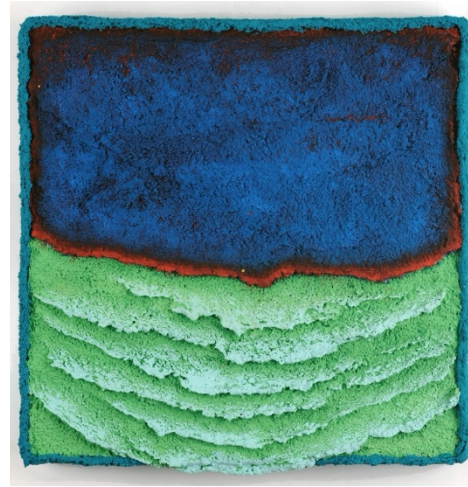


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, February 19, 2025



LEON BERKOWITZ & WAYSON JONES

March 15 – April 26, 2025

Washington, DC - HEMPHILL is pleased to announce two concurrent exhibitions LEON BERKOWITZ & WAYSON JONES, opening on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 4 – 7 p.m. The exhibitions will remain on view through April 26, 2025.

Painters intuitively start with ideas about color. Less obvious and equally as important are the various reductive or additive strategies the artists apply. No prior subject is referenced, no personal content shared, and there is nothing to interpret, only the painting's physical presence exists. Each artist develops a unique method for the creation of works that reduces painting to the purest retinal experience. **Leon Berkowitz** mastered translucent, unbound areas of color without any traces of brushwork, allowing the viewer to look *into* color, not *at* color. The luminous paintings read like ethereal portals into other, softer worlds. **Wayson Jones** is attuned to the quality of surfaces, using a process of building up layers of textured pumice gel in which paint is integrated. The rock-like paintings burst off the wall, enhancing their sculptural appearance. The exuberant works explore color and surface in the opposite way than Berkowitz, adding more and more to the surface until Jones is content with the final object, cascading, neon pumice stone draping over the edge of a square, uniform panel. The two painters embody two extremes of isolating color – Berkowitz creating a disappearing halo of color and Jones lavishing material to a three-dimensional explosion.

Leon Berkowitz (American, 1911 – 1987) studied at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and at the Art Students League in New York, and in his travels studied in France, Italy and Mexico. Spending most of his life in Washington, he taught art in D.C. high schools and at the Corcoran School of Art and was a founder of the Washington Workshop Center for the Arts. His work is held in the collections of the High Museum of Art, the Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Modern Art, NY, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, among other public and private collections.

Wayson Jones (American, b. 1957) is a painter, musician, and spoken-word artist. A self-taught visual artist, he was part of a vibrant Black LGBTQ arts scene in Washington DC in the 1980s and early 1990s. His work can be found in private and public collections in the DC area and nationally including the District of Columbia Art Bank, and the Maryland/National Capitol Park and Planning Commission. Jones is currently serving on the

Phillips Collection Advisory Committee for *Essex Hemphill: Take Care of Your Blessings*, opening in May of 2025. This is Jones' first solo exhibition with Hemphill.

HEMPHILL opened in September 1993 and has since presented over 300 solo and group exhibitions in gallery spaces throughout Washington, DC and, since 2019, in DC's Mt Vernon Triangle neighborhood. The exhibition schedule features modern and contemporary art in all media by artists ranging from emerging to mid-career to modern masters.

GALLERY HOURS:

Tuesday – Saturday 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. and by appointment

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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(Left) Leon Berkowitz, *Transition*, 1979, oil on canvas, 100 1/4 x 82 x 1 1/4 inches (Right) Wayson Jones, *Menthol Blues Migration*, 2023, pumice gel and Flashe on wood panel, 18 x 18 x 2 inches

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION

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