



Leslie Hewitt. *Birthmark*, 2022. Bronze, boulder. 18 x 32 x 23 inches. Photographer: Don Stahl. Courtesy of the artist and Dia Art Foundation.

LESLIE HEWITT

SOFT TREMULOUS LIGHT

September 4 - October 18, 2025

Angles of a Landscape

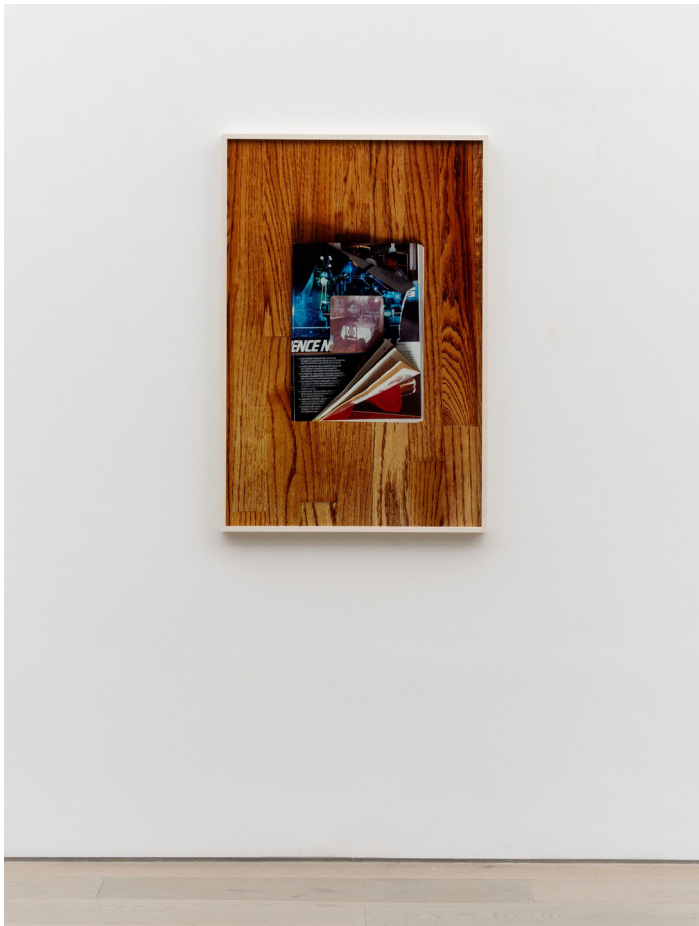
There is a line running through, made by edges touching, by friction, by minimal light, a shadow created by an encounter. It is more of a fault line, perhaps, that displaces the borders between medium, time, space, subject, and object—a seam that redraws the landscape in four dimensions. I am drawn to this delicate, purposeful line that appears at the point where memory image meets surface and then meets something that slips identification and categorization. This subtle geometry conjures the mise-en-scène of doors, windows, portals, places for escape. Framing that defamiliarizes and dilates, rendering concepts of the familiar, unfamiliar, the perceptually and linguistically stable, unstable, yet lucid.

Where so many have turned away from linearity, from a rectangle's sharpness or a grid's brutality, Hewitt reassembles the line and the right angle, over and over, until they become abstracted, untethered, defying the very logics that fetishize their perceived orderliness. With these seams, these joins, Hewitt maps the unencloseable, uncapturable, vibrating forms of black aesthetic life.

Hewitt unfolds photography and builds strange new forms with its bones. After all, she is a bearer of the long tradition of conceptual practices, defined in part by a proclivity to inventively mis-use the built environment and its logical apparatuses.

The effect of these estrangements is to flatten three-dimensional space into abstraction, to restore the photograph to its materiality—paper, surface, shapes, light, liquid, shadows, color. While “flat” colors and textures come forward, the photographed “image” recedes. The shadow between photograph and the surface upon which it lays becomes an edge of encounter. Of mystery. Gazing into this space, we lose our bearings and depth perception. Crumpled paper, painted swathes, penciled boxes, carpet, turf, cement, and wood deepen the confusion of planes and dimension, reminding us that what we see in a photograph is never reality, always made, always already abstract, always already flattening. Yet, what it means for these objects and textures to exist on one plane is not a matter of simplification but of density, compression and recursion.

— Elleza Kelley



Leslie Hewitt. *Riffs on Real Time (9 of 10)*, 2024. Chromogenic print. Framed : 44 3/8 x 30 5/8 inches. Photographer: Guillaume Zicarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

Leslie Hewitt's exhibition at Perrotin New York, titled *Soft Tremulous Light*, is accompanied by the text *Angles of a Landscape* by Elleza Kelley, as a joint exploration of and reaction to what French anthropologist Marc Augé addressed as supermodernity¹. Throughout Hewitt's two decades-long practice, she has developed installations that position the personal, the collective and the literary as interchangeable elements in a seemingly endless series of compositions. The exhibition includes representative works from the following: *Riffs on Real Time*, *Birthmark*, *Rough Cuts* and a new collaborative work titled *Rhombus or Humming Song (1 - 4 - 5)* with fellow artist and life-partner Jamal Cyrus; minimally installed as a constellation.

In *Riffs on Real Time*, Hewitt devotes a year to envisioning sets of temporary triadic sculptures composed from stacked layers of found photographs, archival books, magazines, and obscured documents. Anchored by grounds such as her studio floors and photographed from above, these assemblages compress spatial and temporal strata into a single visual field. In doing so, they enact what Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin terms a *chronotope*²—a configuration in which space and time are inseparable—allowing new spatial logics and temporal resonances to emerge.

Birthmark, a counter-monument first installed on the grounds of Dia Bridgehampton, takes the form of a boulder shaped over centuries by natural forces, its surface quasi-inlaid with a bronze composite contour echoing barrier islands and bodies of water. In re-siting this work within the "white cube," Hewitt acknowledges both the constraints and affordances of institutional space. The extended iteration, *Rough Cuts*, incorporates pointed references to the obfuscation and disruption of nineteenth-century taxonomies, presenting abstracted interpretations of botanical illustrations of various American wildflowers. These gestures not only resist classificatory fixity but also re-inscribe ephemeral and overlooked forms of knowledge into the art-historical record.

¹Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995).



Leslie Hewitt. *Riffs on Real Time (3 of 10)*, 2024. Chromogenic print. Framed : 44 1/4 x 30 5/8 inches. Photographer: Guillaume Zicarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

The collaborative wall sculpture *Rhombus or Humming Song (1–4–5)*, constructed from wood and bronze, continues Hewitt's and Cyrus' investigation into the interrelations between sound, form, and resonance, suggesting a synesthetic mapping of sensorial experience. Moving fluidly between sculpture and photography—and back again—*Soft Tremulous Light* engages geological and photographic time, framing depth as a visual, psychological and tactile encounter. Here, the *chronotope*² functions not merely as a conceptual device but as an phenomenological condition, situating the viewer within an experiential field where the scales of memory, perception, and historical consciousness converge.

About the artist

Working with photography, sculpture, and site-specific installations, Leslie Hewitt addresses fluid notions of time. Hewitt has received broad institutional recognition with solo exhibitions at Dia Bridgehampton; Carpenter Center, Harvard University; The Sculpture Center, NY; MoCA Chicago; ICA Boston; she was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial and The 57th Carnegie International, and groups shows at MAXXI Museum, Rome; Hammer Museum, LA; LACMA; Guggenheim Museum, NY; Brooklyn Museum; The Metropolitan Museum, NY; MoMA, NY; among others. Concurrently with this solo exhibition at Perrotin, she will open an exhibition at Norton Museum of Art curated by Lauren Richman.

About collaborators

Elleza Kelley (PhD) specializes in African American literature, with an emphasis on black geographies and radical spatial practice in the United States. Her research traces how Black spatial knowledge and practice appear in literature and art, particularly through experimentation with form, genre and media.

Jamal Cyrus is an American conceptual artist who works in a range of media, including drawing, sculpture, textiles, assemblage, installation, performance, and sound.

²Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).