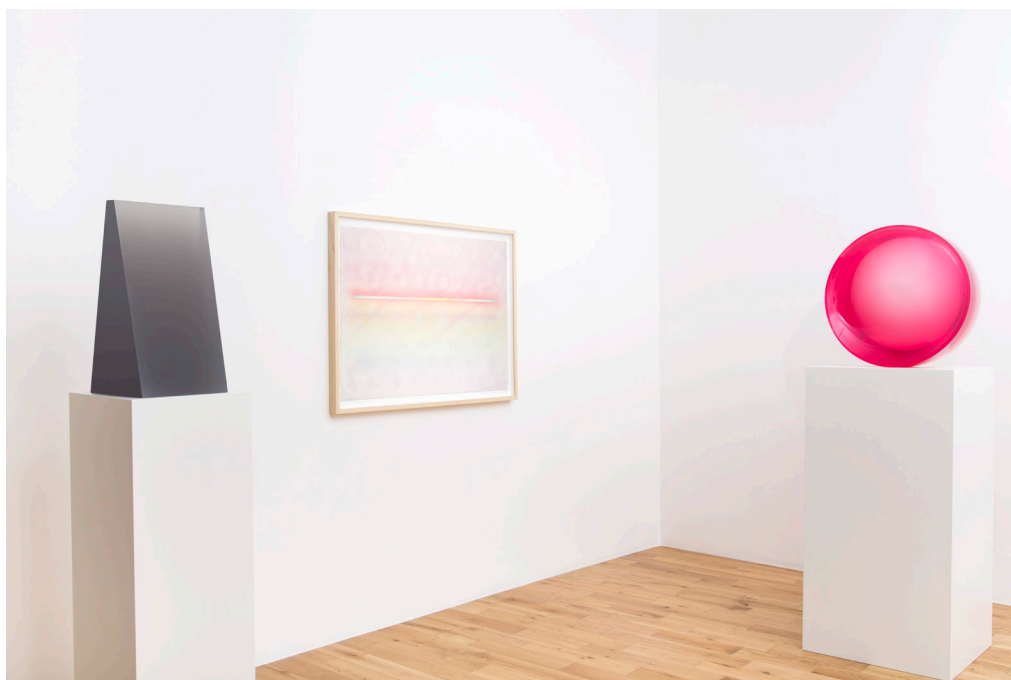


**Artsy:** 'DeWain Valentine Brings Some Sunshine to London with His Pioneering Light and Space Sculptures', by Alexxa Gotthardt, October 14th 2015

## DeWain Valentine Brings Some Sunshine to London with His Pioneering Light and Space Sculptures

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT  
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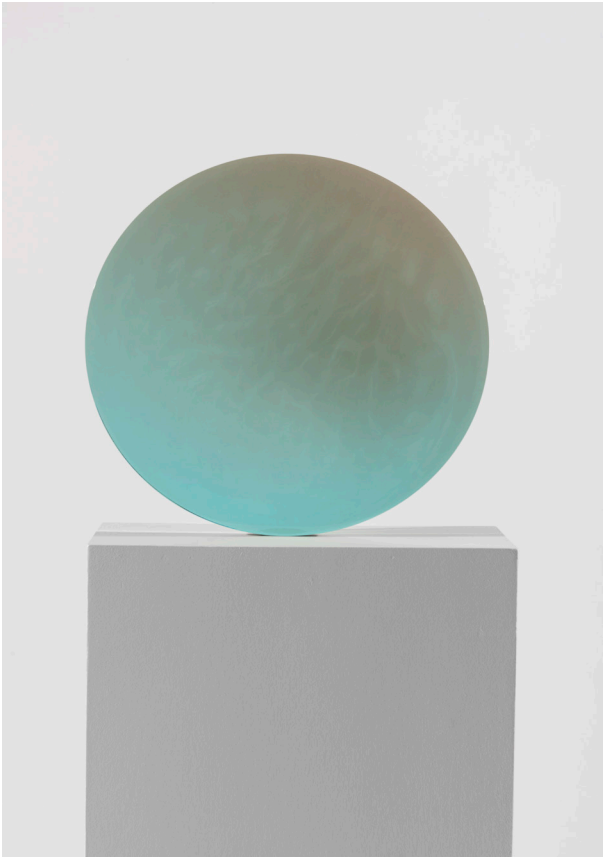
Installation view, DeWain Valentine, Almine Rech Gallery, London. Photo by Melissa Castro Duarte.

When DeWain Valentine first showed his portfolio to New York galleries in the early-1960s, it was “poo-pooed,” according to the 79-year-old artist. It wasn’t the formal qualities of Valentine’s works (semi-transparent, minimalist sculptures that give physical form to light and atmosphere) that bothered the gallerists; they took issue with the material, cast polyester resin, or plastic. Luckily, what’s anathema on the East Coast is often A-okay on the West. Los Angeles welcomed plastic, and Valentine along with it. There, in Venice Beach in the mid-’60s, he settled and made the work that would lodge him firmly into the Light and Space circle, and later, into the overarching art historical canon.



Installation view, DeWain Valentine, Almine Rech Gallery, London. Photo by Melissa Castro Duarte.

But Valentine's canonization came late—just several years ago, when his work was reintroduced on an institutional scale in “Pacific Standard Time,” a watershed exhibition, across a spread of Southern California museums, that rounded up the most influential of the region's art. An exhibition at the Getty focused on his massive Gray Column (1975–76). Soon after, his sculptures started surfacing in L.A. and New York galleries alike. In 2014, Almine Rech showed Valentine in Paris. This past summer, David Zwirner presented an installation of the artist's cast-resin sculptures from the '60s and '70s, many of which Valentine restored for the show—the experience of being surrounded by the large, luminous, portal-like discs and columns felt transcendent. And this week, Almine Rech opens Valentine's first-ever U.K. solo show, where iconic sculptures from the '60s and '70s are surrounded by small, ethereal watercolors—his “Skyline” series—from the '80s and '90s. An extension of the exhibition also fills the gallery's booth at Frieze Masters.



DeWain Valentine  
Blue to Gray Circle, 1970  
Almine Rech



DeWain Valentine  
Rose to Clear Circle, 1970  
Almine Rech

The cast polyester resin sculptures on view at the gallery's London space resemble large crystals, sliced and polished smooth to their lustrous essence in minimalist, geometric shapes. In two smaller-scale discs, *Rose to Clear Circle* and *Blue to Gray Circle*, both made in 1970, Valentine casts ethereal gradients in resin, recalling dusky skies and ocean water, respectively. A prismatic piece, *Clear Portal* (1969-2014), about the size of a human torso, captures and distorts light—and the viewer's own reflection—in its lucid facets.

It's no wonder that the sculptures have the luminescence of shining, primordial stones. Growing up in Colorado, in a family descended from miners (Valentine's great grandfather originally came to Colorado, from Copenhagen, to prospect for gold), the artist "became fascinated with rocks," he has recounted. Since then, he's captured his natural surroundings by emulating the polished minerals, scaling them up, and rendering them translucent and ethereal—totems to nature's ability to conjure atmosphere and awe. "All the work is about the sea and the sky. I would like to have some way, a magic saw, to cut out large chunks of ocean or sky and say, 'Here it is,'" the artist, famously affable and recognizable for his signature cowboy hat and long gray ponytail, has said of his work.



Installation view, DeWain Valentine, Almine Rech Gallery, London. Photo by Melissa Castro Duarte.

The show at Almine Rech represents not only the diffusion of Valentine's work internationally, but also the acknowledgement of Light and Space's influence on art made over the last half-century. When Valentine arrived in L.A. from Colorado, he immediately befriended a group of like-minded artists, Peter Alexander, Larry Bell, Robert Irwin among them. They all responded to the light and landscape of California—not to mention all the industrial materials available to them—siphoning the atmosphere into lustrous, sometimes glowing minimalist works that not only captured that vastness and wonder of light, but also transformed it, and the space around it.

—Alexxa Gotthardt

"DeWain Valentine" is on view at Almine Rech, London, Oct. 13 – Nov. 21, 2015.