

DeWain Valentine

GALERIE ALMINE RECH | PARIS

64 Rue de Turenne

April 26-June 7

DeWain Valentine's first exhibition in Paris marks only the second European solo show for the seventy-eight-year-old Los Angeles-based artist best known for his large-scale glass and plastic sculptures. The current Valentine miniretrospective features nine cast polyester resin works made between 1969 and 1975, all of which feel surprisingly fresh, in part because many have never been shown before, but also because their smooth, shiny surfaces look as if they were made yesterday, rather than over forty years ago.

While Valentine's translucent sculptures initially appear simple, their complex geometry and coloration produce dazzling prismatic effects and other mesmerizing visual distortions. Column Gray with Cloud, 1969-70, for instance, is not a precise rectangle, but a gently curved trapezoidal form. The saturated tawny-gray of the base becomes more transparent as the column tapers upward. A murky blotch in the upper portion of the sculpture (the result of unevenly dispersed pigment in the once-liquid resin) is an example of the unpredictable flaws that Valentine poetically refers to as "clouds." These sorts of imperfections (compared with Donald Judd's or Tony Smith's industrial perfections) make Valentine's sculptures appealingly human and, by design, unique.

In two more recent paintings, both titled Nightline Passage, both 1992, gauzy clouds hover in dark skies and behind a thin strip of collaged Plexiglas, which suggests the horizon line of a seascape. In addition to referencing the particular LA vistas and light quality that inspired Valentine and his Light and Space artist peers (John McCracken, James Turrell, and Larry Bell, among others), these paintings reinforce the atmospheric qualities of Valentine's resin sculptures, which evoke an orangey smog haze, gray storm clouds, and glinting sapphire seas.



View of "DeWain Valentine," 2014