

1969-70 REVISITED
RICHARD VAN BUREN
March 11–April 15, 2023

Parker Gallery is proud to present a solo exhibition of wall sculptures by Maine-based artist Richard Van Buren (b. 1937). This will be the artist's first solo presentation in Southern California, marking a homecoming for the Los Angeles native.

Known for his experimental approach to sculpture made with polyester resin, Van Buren has been exploring, expanding and updating the material possibilities of plastics for more than fifty years. This exhibition highlights singular examples from two early bodies of work originally conceived in 1969 and 1970, materialized here for the first time.

In the late 1960s, Van Buren moved his sculptures from the floor to the wall, activating a perceptual shift and bodily relationship between object and viewer. The hard-edged geometric forms in this exhibition—*Jezzine*, *Anjar*, *Sidon* and *Jammu* (all 1969/2023), titled after cities he visited in Lebanon and India—are made by coating angled wood beams with pigmented polyester resin. Although Van Buren was included in the landmark *Primary Structures* exhibition at The Jewish Museum in 1966, his work from this period subtly belies traditional minimalist sculpture: the finished forms have slight irregularities that bear the marks of their production, a multistep process of cutting, joining, mixing, and sanding. Each pigment is carefully selected and mixed with polyester resin, then applied in varying amounts, creating works that have alternately solid and transparent surfaces that are as much about color as they are about light.

Van Buren's longstanding interest in the relationship between industrially produced and organic forms gave rise to multi-part wall sculptures that are looser in shape and approach. Made by pouring polyester resin over twisted fiberglass rope, *Babalahara* (1969/2023) and *Graphite Dance* (1970/2023) have a similarly restrained palette to their rectangular counterparts, but are characterized by asymmetrical, amorphous parts, each with their own internal structure approaching abstraction. Later works expand on these original experiments, growing to include a widening list of materials and processes. No matter the form, the aspect of discovery and change has been consistent throughout the artist's practice, as has the lasting influence, tension, and co-existence of the natural world and the built environment.

Richard Van Buren (b. 1937 in Syracuse, New York) lives and works in Perry, Maine. Recent solo exhibitions include those held at Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY (2013, 2016, and 2019), South Dakota Art Museum, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD (2018), Gary Snyder Gallery, New York, NY (2011), Tides Institute and Museum of Art, Eastport, ME (2010) and Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME (2003). His work has been included in significant museum exhibitions including *Primary Structures*, Jewish Museum, NY (1966), *A Romantic Minimalism*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (1967), *A Plastic Presence*, Milwaukee Art Center, Wisconsin (1970) and *Works for New Spaces*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1971). His work is in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, among others.