

# Wally Hedrick at The Box

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Text by Pablo Lopez



Wally Hedrick, *The Absence of Light: Black Paintings (1957-2003)* (installation view).  
Image courtesy of the Wally Hedrick Estate and The Box, LA. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen.

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Stepping into Wally Hedrick's immersive painting *War Room* (1967/68-2003) is to be enveloped by a capacious and constructive force: the color black. *War Room*, a cube-shaped monochromatic canvas cell, acts as a virtual heart of darkness to the fourteen black paintings that surround it. It commands attention and re-tunes ocular sensitivity to the particularities of the color black's starkness and depth.

Clearly in conversation with former instances of monochromatic painting (particularly the white paintings of Robert Ryman), *The Absence of Light: Black Paintings* (1957-2003) offers an alternative to tightly-reined minimalism, opting instead for the constructive possibilities and depths of imprecision. The canvases are unruly and strategically inconsistent: many appear stippled, blistered, and in various states of textural duress. Hedrick's attention to subtle and incisive variation renders the uniform nature of the monochrome complex and fraught with affectivity.

Hedrick's black series is articulate of his commitment to protest borne out of an anti-war activism. For Hedrick, the black paintings are not only engaged in a vigorous conversation about painting, they propagate a belief in the strength of monochromatic painting's ability to convey the most ethically unresolvable and affectively complex set of considerations: the horrors of war.

*Wally Hedrick: The Absence of Light* runs April 30-June 11, 2016 at The Box (805 Traction Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90013)



**Wally Hedrick, *The Absence of Light: Black Paintings* (1957-2003) (installation view). Image courtesy of the Wally Hedrick Estate and The Box, LA. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen.**



Wally Hedrick, *Black Bush Burning* (2002). Oil on canvas, 12 x 10 inches. Image courtesy of the Wally Hedrick Estate and The Box, LA.



Wally Hedrick, *The Absence of Light: Black Paintings (1957-2003)* (installation view). Image courtesy of the Wally Hedrick Estate and The Box, LA. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen.



Wally Hedrick, *Vietnam Series XX* (1968). Oil on canvas, 64 x 46 inches. Image courtesy of the Wally Hedrick Estate and The Box, LA.



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