

LADDIE JOHN DILL



Laddie John Dill, a Los Angeles artist, had his first solo exhibition in New York City with Illeanna Sonnabend Gallery in 1971. He was one of the first Los Angeles artists to exhibit “light and space” work in New York. He exhibited the “Light Sentences” and “Light Plains” in institutions across the United States and globally, and has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in these pieces in the last decade as well, including a recent acquisition of a “Light Plains” sculpture by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It is currently on view in Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan. Dill has been crafting light and earthy materials like concrete, glass, sand, and metal into luminous sculptures, wall –pieces, and installations since the 1970s. Referring to his choice of materials, Dill explains: “I was influenced by [Robert] Rauschenberg, Keith Sonnier, Robert Smithson, Dennis Oppenheim, and Robert Irwin, who were working with earth materials, light, and space as an alternative to easel painting.” When Dill does use canvas, he paints with pigments derived from cement and natural oxides.

Noted art critic and writer for the New York Times, Ken Johnson, has stated:

“At the end of the 1960s the West Coast Light and Space artist Laddie John Dill began producing electric light works out of custom-made, blown-glass tubes in a lush palette of jewel-bright colors... Some are made of many short pieces, some of longer parts and fewer colors. They glow beautifully like strings of illuminated glass beads. Mr. Dill called these works “Light Sentences,” likening the segments of color to words grouped in phrases and sentences. This suggests that light itself could be a transcendental language. But the effect of these works in concert is less verbal and more like trippy visual chamber music.”

Laddie John Dill was born in Long Beach, CA in 1943. He graduated from Chouinard Art Institute in 1968 with a BFA. After graduating, Dill became a printing apprentice and worked closely with established artists, like Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jasper Johns. Laddie John Dill’s work is in the permanent collections of national and international institutions such as Museum of Modern Art, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; High Museum, GA; The Phillips Collection, DC; Chicago Art Institute, IL; Smithsonian, DC; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Pio Monte della Misericordia, Italy; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, CA; and Museo Jumex, Mexico. He currently lives and works in Venice, CA where he maintains a studio.