

Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present

Linear Curves

Leon Polk Smith – Works from the 1960s

January 11 – February 22, 2014

For all the open spaces, the stark inspiration of his native Oklahoma, Hard Edge painter Leon Polk Smith (1906 – 1996) found his ultimate muse in the city of New York. “New York City revealed its physical self to me through the mountains and canyons of the Southwest...I felt the city to be the perfect equation for a great abstraction.”

Though possessed with an artist’s sensitivity, Smith journeyed to New York to attend Columbia University’s Teachers College. But there, in 1936, he came in contact with the work of European modernists Jean Arp, Constantin Brancusi and Piet Mondrian. Inspired by these fresh-eyed provocateurs and driven by his own tireless ambition, Smith embarked on a systematic exploration of non-gestural abstraction and established himself as a trail-blazing highly respected artist.

In every decade, Smith’s canvasses confound the viewer’s understanding of space. But the genesis for works featured in this exhibition arrived in 1954 via a sporting goods catalogue. The strong outlines of baseballs, tennis balls and footballs provoked a revelatory series of drawings and then paintings known as tondos; curvilinear forms painted on disk-shaped surfaces in a palette of strong primary colors. Ovals of orange, spheres of blue and green, clean edged cubes arranged in the manner of a stairway. No matter where they lead, on paper or canvas, all the works reflect the inventive curiosity of their maker.

Gallery hours: Tuesday - Friday 10am - 6pm; Saturday 11am - 5pm

For further information contact the gallery at 310-276-0147 or

info@louissternfinearts.com