

# **Transcendent**

**Curated by Michael Duncan**

**December 10, 2022 – January 28, 2023**

Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present *Transcendent*, curated by Michael Duncan. Stemming from the achievements of Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian, and Hilma af Klint, ensuing generations of artists have desired to create spiritually illuminating abstract art. The Transcendental Painting Group of the 1930s (TPG) – surveyed in the traveling exhibition *Another World: The Transcendental Painting Group* (opening at Los Angeles County Museum of Art on December 16) – was dedicated to the creation and promotion of art that carried painting beyond the appearance of the physical world, utilizing the rich symbolic connotations of geometry and form.

The artists of this exhibition continued that pursuit in various ways. In 1960 TPG founder Raymond Jonson selected works by Frederick Wight for a solo exhibition at the University of New Mexico. After Wight's 1973 retirement as Director of the University Art Gallery at UCLA, he devoted himself full time to painting, creating a large body of hallucinatory landscapes and luminous seascapes. New York painter Stephen Mueller's richly hued lyrical abstractions were inspired by Tantric sources, German Romanticism, Islamic art and Eastern philosophies. Textured works by the late artist Lee Mullican map light, space, and landscapes in an enduring quest to coordinate relations between spirituality and cosmology, inner and outer space, and modern and ancient art. Now living near the former studio of TPG master Agnes Pelton, Sharon Ellis is creating works that transfigure our perceptions of nature into cosmic realms. Nancy Evans' poetic responses to nature result in metaphorically rich luminous abstractions. Khang Nguyen, Mary Anna Pomonis, and Eric Beltz explore the power of geometry to evoke contemplative thought and resonant emotions. Kymber Holt exposes the evocative connotations of macrocosmic and microcosmic vision. Finally, in a quiet vein, Tom Wudl and Laura Lasworth offer mandala-like paeans to the potential beauty and serenity of thought and nature.

In an art world steeped in cynicism, political rancor, and frenzied commerce, the works of *Transcendent* offer an alternative, transformative, and more hopeful vision of our place in the universe.