

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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EXHIBITION:**AL TAYLOR: EARLY WORK****DATES:****January 9 - March 1, 2008****Opening Reception: Wednesday, January 9, 6-8pm**

On January 9, 2008 Zwirner & Wirth will present a selection of important early drawings and three-dimensional pieces by the American artist Al Taylor (1948-1999). This will be the first exhibition of Taylor's work at Zwirner & Wirth since the gallery announced its representation of the artist's estate.

Al Taylor: Early Work will examine the development of Taylor's distinctive approach to art-making over the years 1985-1990. While he began his studio practice as a painter, in 1985 Taylor devised a uniquely innovative approach to process and materials that encompassed two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional assemblages. Taylor ultimately sought to expand the possibilities of vision by creating new ways of experiencing and envisioning space, and these works provide an insight into the artist's thoughts and his investigations of perception across several dimensions.

Taylor saw no distinction between his three-dimensional works and his drawings, and he willfully dismissed the term "sculpture" for his constructions, likening them instead to a kind of "drawing in space." Taylor fashioned these works out of unconventional materials, incorporating simple elements such as wooden broomsticks, wire, carpentry remnants, and other found objects into delicate constructions that offered a multitude of distinct viewpoints. His drawings, moreover, would often inspire the development of these three-dimensional works, which the artist would create in order to "see more." These works would subsequently form the basis of further explorations on paper, which would document the new visual perspectives that were opened up through this process. In his own words, Taylor noted, "This work isn't at all about sculptural concerns; it comes from a flatter set of traditions. What I am really after is finding a way to make a group of drawings that you can look around. Like a pool player, I want to have all the angles covered."¹

Taylor's work was inspired by a range of influences, that included ideas from physics and mathematics about depth, volume, and measurement; art historical precedents such as the sculptures of Matisse and the time-lapse photography of Etienne-Jules Marey; everyday phenomena that the artist noticed on the street; and personal references. Taylor drew upon these scientific and cultural influences in order to create arbitrary rules that were set up to be broken, providing unexpected—and often humorous—ways to investigate and research vision.

The exhibition will include drawings and a selection of the artist's earliest three-dimensional works, beginning with his 1985 "Latin Studies" series, in which linear components of painted wood circle toward and retreat from volume resisting static fixity. Melding the velocity of line with contradictory plays upon perspective, Taylor further explored the pictorial plane in his evocative assemblages of multi-colored broomsticks, such as *Untitled: (Eating with Children)*, 1986, and *Untitled: (Bra)*, 1987. The ambiguous accumulation of linear and planar layers in the artist's drawings and three-dimensional objects was expanded moreover by his use of shadows cast upon the wall as a material medium. Taylor playfully lures the eye into a "trap of space,"² as exemplified by *6-8-9*, 1988; *Calligraphy Support*, 1987-1988; and his "Wire Instrument" series of 1989-90.

It is through Al Taylor's exploration of visual possibility that the viewer is invited to discover new ways of seeing the world. His "experiments" combined seemingly incongruous materials and concepts in order to find new relationships between subject-matter, space, and meaning. As the artist aptly noted, "Instead of forcing myself onto some anonymous objects, I try to find a method that will allow them to form their own logic beyond me."³

On the occasion of the exhibition, Zwirner & Wirth, in collaboration with Steidl, will publish an extensive hard-cover monograph on the artist's early work. This publication will feature an essay by Robert Storr and an interview with Taylor that was conducted by Ulrich Loock in 1992.

Al Taylor was born in Springfield, Missouri and studied at the Kansas City Art Institute. He moved to New York in 1970, where he would continue to live and work until his death in 1999. His first solo exhibition took place in 1986 at the Alfred Kren Gallery in New York, and his work would go on to be shown in numerous exhibitions in America and Europe, including solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Bern (1992) and the Kunstmuseum Luzern (1999) in Switzerland. A retrospective of Taylor's drawings was recently organized by the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2006), and his work is found in a number of prominent public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

For further information, please contact the gallery.

¹ From an unpublished artist's statement, July 1990.

² Paraphrased from Klaus Kertess, "Lines of Sight" in *Al Taylor: Recent Work* (New York: Alfred Kren Gallery, 1986), n.p.

³ Al Taylor, in "Ulrich Loock and Al Taylor: A Conversation" originally published in *Al Taylor* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1992), p. 42.