

FLEISHER OLLMAN GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Bill Walton: *At Work*

Exhibition Dates: February 24 - March 26, 2011

Opening Reception: February 24 from 6 - 8pm

Fleisher/Ollman is very pleased to announce an exhibition of sculptures by the late artist Bill Walton. The exhibition will survey Walton's wall and floor works made from a spare vocabulary of basic materials and subtle interventions. These intimate investigations, undertaken during a career spanning more than 40 years, are culled from the artist's Estate and several have been loaned by collectors specifically for the exhibition.

Walton pursued moments of the sublime that one might easily overlook in common materials such as cloth, wood, metal and glass and in everyday gestures such as turning, folding, milling and stacking. He respected the history and memory of materials while undertaking slight alterations and careful transformations. He revered nature, landscape, travel and memory. For example, the wall sculpture, *Cinco Flats*, installed over a seventeen foot expanse is a reductive and poetic response to the North Dakota landscape. Two and three-dimensional works from the *Channel Markers* series were inspired by a coastal town swallowed by rising tides. Other works, including *Sightings Creek*, pay homage to fishing, a life-long passion of Walton's.

Despite employing the formal language of minimalism, Walton's works are not minimalist sculptures, in that his interests and influences prove to be broader, more complicated, and more mischievous. Valuing work and craftsmanship, the artist transformed, created illusions, engaged in alchemy, obscured and revealed. He played with conventions – making sculptures that reference painting and paintings that function like sculptures, presenting a piece that might only read as a found object, lighting the space in between objects. Close and thoughtful inspection reveals a rich practice that substantiates the statement made by Walton, "I can't seem to find anything that doesn't influence my work."

Bill Walton (1935-2010) was born in Camden, New Jersey and briefly studied at the Institute of Design in Chicago before moving to Philadelphia in 1964 where he was a commercial printmaker by trade and later an instructor at Moore College of Art and Design (1974-1990). Interested in the materials used for printmaking – wood, lead, steel – more than the finished product, Walton began to make sculptures after seeing an exhibition of sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He had his first exhibition in 1971 and over his long career exhibited in galleries nationally and at a variety of institutions including the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Yale University Gallery and Wesley College.

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