



HERBERT GENTRY:
THE GESTURE OF JAZZ

RYAN
LEE / Art | Basel
Miami Beach
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BOOTH S8



Herbert Gentry

Autour De Moi II, 1971

Oil on canvas

53 5/8 x 41 5/8 inches (136.2 x 105.7 cm)

\$145,000

Exhibition History:

2014 *Making Connections: The Art and Life of Herbert Gentry*, Boston University Art Gallery, MA.

2014 *Interior Man: Herbert Gentry and His Contemporaries*, the N’Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, MI.

2008 *Herb Gentry: The Man, the Master, the Magic*, Diggs Gallery, Winston Salem State University, NC.

2007 *The Magic Within*, James E. Lewis Museum, Morgan State University, MD.



Autour de Moi (scale), 1971

RYAN LEE Gallery is pleased to present landmark paintings by Herbert Gentry (b. 1919, Pittsburgh, PA – d. 2003, Stockholm, Sweden) at this year's Art Basel Miami Beach. The paintings on view are the culmination of an international life that was marked at its half-way point by a retrospective at the Royal Academy (Kungliga Akademien) in Stockholm, Sweden in 1976 — the first time the museum honored a non-Scandinavian artist. Many of the paintings shown here were exhibited at this important presentation of Gentry's work.

When he returned to Paris on the GI Bill in 1946, Gentry studied under Georges Braque. There, scholar Rashida K. Braggs writes, "fueled by a jazz spirit, Herbert Gentry instinctually connected with others, merging Harlem's salon culture with Parisian café culture." While it was hard for Americans to show in Paris, he exhibited with Galerie Seine (1949) and Galerie Huit (1950). In 1949, Gentry opened a popular gallery-jazz club in the French capital, Chez Honey. This café-club became a significant gathering space not only for expatriated American artists such as Beauford Delaney and Romare Bearden, but also eminent musicians such as Eartha Kitt, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington.

While in Paris, Gentry became involved with the flourishing CoBrA movement. He was invited to exhibit in Copenhagen, where he lived for five years before moving to Stockholm. Following this move, gestural abstraction became his primary style, and his career thrived in Denmark and Sweden, where he became very involved in underground jazz scenes.

Herbert Gentry's work has recently been acquired by the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN; Saint Louis Art Museum, MO; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; among others. His work is in more than 50 museum collections worldwide. This is Gentry's first time being shown at Art Basel Miami Beach.



As Romare Bearden once wrote, Gentry “celebrates his joy in living with lusty pigments that swing across his canvas in a swirling activity. In his sensual enthusiasm for the drama of color and of life, everything in the works appears to be vibrating with a sonority that comes not so much from actual visual experience, but rather from an assimilation of many, many things both seen and felt and imagined.”



Herbert Gentry

Le Jardin, 1959-1960

Oil on canvas

49 3/8 x 41 3/8 inches (125.4 x 105.1 cm)

\$145,000

Exhibition History:

2008 *Herb Gentry: The Man, the Master, the Magic*, Diggs Gallery, Winston Salem State University, NC.

2007 *Facing Other Ways: Herbert Gentry and African American Abstraction*, University of Rochester, NY.

Gentry's deepening interest in abstraction and constant jazz influence was reflected by overlapping forms, fused by line and color, which are diligently organized by an inner sense of rhythm that both provide structure to and emanate from Gentry's paintings. Figures, reminiscent of Picasso's revolutionary abstractions and the so-called "primitive" western African masks that inspired him, organically came together in Gentry's maze of lines and bright colors. Gentry's paintings reclaimed the African influences that his white peers and predecessors used in their work, while seeking a universality that connected with viewers on both sides of the Atlantic.



Le Jardin (scale), 1959-1960



Herbert Gentry

Les Deux, 1975

Oil on canvas

48 3/8 x 37 1/2 inches (122.9 x 95.3 cm)

\$110,000

Exhibition History:

- 2014 *Interior Man: Herbert Gentry and His Contemporaries*, the N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, MI.
2007 *The Magic Within*, James E. Lewis Museum, Morgan State University, MD.
2005 *Face to Face: Paintings by Herbert Gentry*, the Phillips Museum of Art, Franklin & Marshall College, PA.
1976 *Herbert Gentry: 20-Year Retrospective*, Kungliga Konstakademien för de Fria Konsten [The Royal Academy of Fine Arts], Stockholm, Sweden; Traveled to the Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki, Finland; and the Norrköpings Art Museum, Sweden.



Herbert Gentry

Red/Black, 1975

Oil on canvas

48 x 37 3/8 inches (121.9 x 94.9 cm)

\$110,000

Exhibition History:

1976 *Herbert Gentry: 20-Year Retrospective*, Kungliga Konstakademien för de Fria Konsten [The Royal Academy of Fine Arts], Stockholm, Sweden; Traveled to the Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki, Finland; and the Norrköpings Art Museum, Sweden.



Herbert Gentry

Opened Lock 2, 1965

Oil on canvas

37 3/4 x 25 1/4 inches (95.9 x 64.1 cm)

\$85,000



Opened Lock 2 (scale) 1965



Herbert Gentry

Separation, 1969-1970

Oil on canvas

37 x 24 3/4 inches (94 x 62.9 cm)

\$85,000

Exhibition History:

1976 *Herbert Gentry: 20-Year Retrospective*, Kungliga Konstakademien för de Fria Konsten [The Royal Academy of Fine Arts], Stockholm, Sweden; Traveled to the Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki, Finland; and the Norrköpings Art Museum, Sweden.



Herbert Gentry

Another Group, 1971

Acrylic on canvas

31 3/4 x 27 inches (80.6 x 68.6 cm)

\$65,000

Exhibition History:

2007 *Facing Other Ways: Herbert Gentry and African American Abstraction*, University of Rochester, NY.



Another Group (scale) 1971

Raised by a dancer and Ziegfield girl who performed with the likes of Josephine Baker, Gentry was steeped in a culture of creative bohemia from a young age, and lived out this ethos for the rest of his life. He was drafted in the segregated US forces, and was one of the first to return to Paris on the GI Bill in 1946.

Throughout his life in France, Denmark, Sweden, and later, New York, Gentry gathered people around him. He acted as a connector, a mentor, and a friend to many American and European artists. He was closely associated with leading African American artists such as Beauford Delaney, Ed Clark, Jacob Lawrence, and Bill Hutson, among others.

Gentry absorbed diverse artistic influences, from the improvisation of the New York School of painters to the symbolism of European Surrealism and gesture of Art Informel. His works are a convergence of these styles from both continents, creating his own approach that was universal and distinctive.



Herbert Gentry

Les Deux, 1973-1974

Acrylic on linen

27 3/4 x 24 inches (70.5 x 61 cm)

\$55,000



Herbert Gentry

Under-Man, 1973

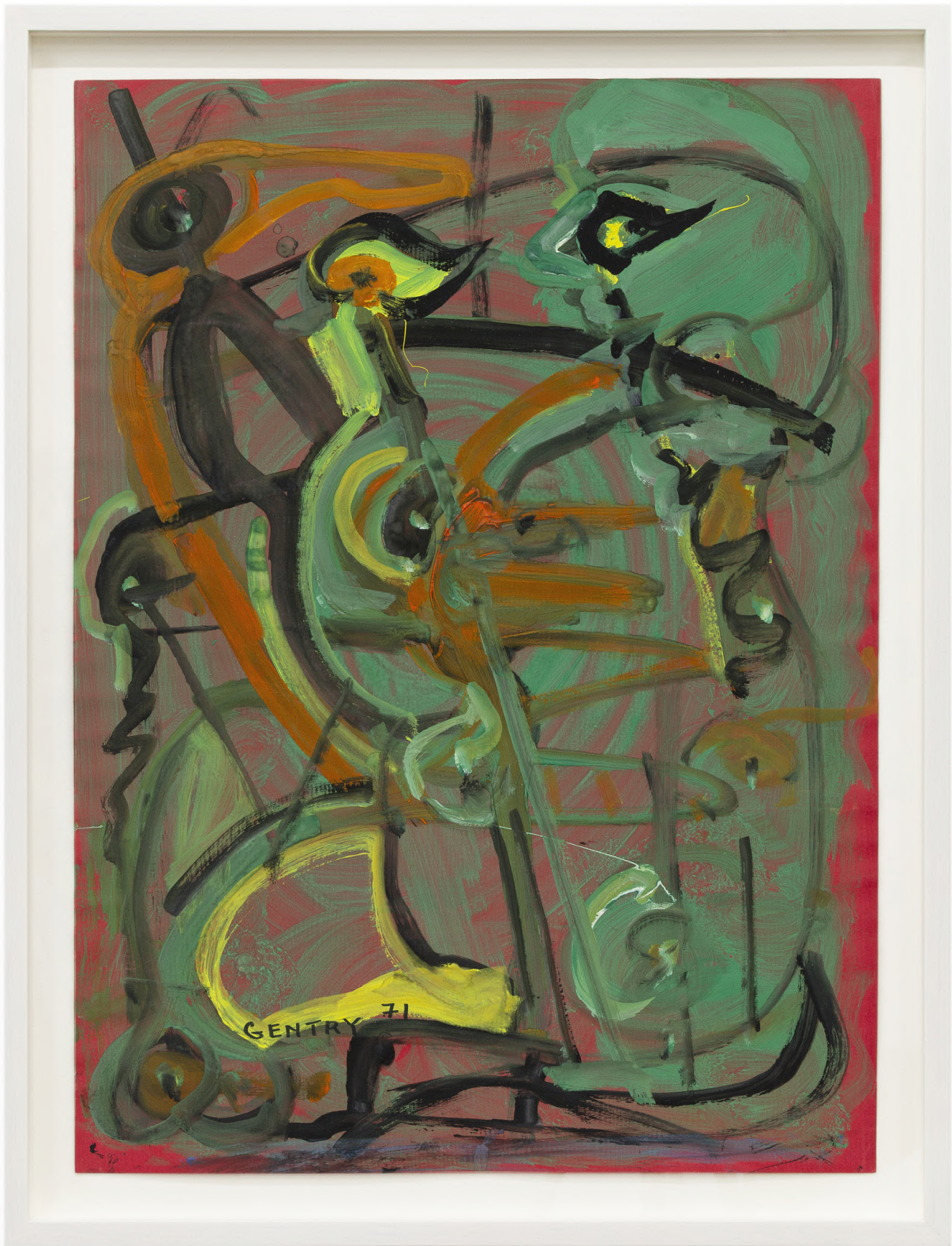
Oil on canvas

25 7/16 x 29 3/4 inches (64.6 x 75.6 cm)

\$55,000

Exhibition History:

1976 *Herbert Gentry: 20-Year Retrospective*, Kungliga Konstakademien för de Fria Konsten [The Royal Academy of Fine Arts], Stockholm, Sweden; Traveled to the Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki, Finland; and the Norrköpings Art Museum, Sweden.



Herbert Gentry

Talking to the Birds, 1971

Gouache on paper

Paper Dimensions: 25 1/4 x 18 3/4 inches (64.1 x 47.6 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 28 1/2 x 22 inches (72.4 x 55.9 cm)

\$22,000



Herbert Gentry

Untitled, 1964

Gouache on paper

Paper Dimensions: 23 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches (60.3 x 50.2 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 28 1/2 x 22 3/4 inches (72.4 x 57.8 cm)

\$22,000



Untitled (scale), 1964



Herbert Gentry

Untitled Yellow, 1964

Gouache on paper

Paper Dimensions: 24 1/4 x 19 1/2 inches (61.6 x 49.5 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 26 3/4 x 22 inches (67.9 x 55.9 cm)

\$22,000



Herbert Gentry

The Positive Chain, 1963

Gouache on paper

Paper Dimensions: 11 5/8 x 16 1/2 inches (29.5 x 41.9 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 18 7/8 x 23 3/4 inches (47.9 x 60.3 cm)

\$18,000

Exhibition History:

2007 *Facing Other Ways: Herbert Gentry and African American Abstraction*, University of Rochester, NY.

1964 *10 American Negro Artists Living and Working in Europe*, Den Frie, Copenhagen, Denmark.



The Positive Chain (scale) 1963

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

(forthcoming) Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2025) • Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA (2024) • Scandinavia House, New York, NY (2024) • Grey Art Museum, New York, NY (2024) • Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI (2024) • National Nordic Museum, Seattle, WA (2024) • Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ (2024) • Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2023) • San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2022) • David C. Driskell Center at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD (2022) • Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY (2021) • Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC (2020) • Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI (2019) • Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT (2019) • Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, MO (2019) • N’Namdi Contemporary, Miami, FL (2019) • Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2018) • The National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, DC (2016)

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Basel Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland • Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY • Centre Pompidou, Paris, France • Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI • de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA • Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC • Malmo Museum, Malmo, Sweden • Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY • Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN • Moderna Museum, Stockholm, Sweden • Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany • National Gallery, Oslo, Norway • National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi, India • National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden • National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC • Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA • Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC • Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands • Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO • San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA • Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY • Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT



Herbert Gentry

Untitled, 1965

Gouache on paper

Paper Dimensions: 12 3/4 x 19 1/2 inches (32.4 x 49.5 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 20 1/8 x 26 7/8 inches (51.1 x 68.3 cm)

\$18,000



Herbert Gentry

Untitled Red-Brown, 1964

Gouache on wallpaper

Paper Dimensions: 14 3/8 x 22 inches (36.5 x 55.9 cm)

Framed Dimensions: 16 5/8 x 24 1/4 inches (42.2 x 61.6 cm)

\$18,000

Exhibition History:

2007 *Facing Other Ways: Herbert Gentry and African American Abstraction*, University of Rochester, NY.