

APALAZZOGALLERY

LARRY STANTON

IMAGES

6 October 2024 – 6 January 2025

APALAZZOGALLERY is delighted to present *IMAGES*, the first retrospective dedicated to the American artist **Larry Stanton** (1947–1984), which follows the success of the publication *Larry Stanton. Think of Me Where It Thunders* published by APARTAMENTO, and the special project in collaboration with ACNE Studio and Visual AIDS New York City. The exhibition, staged **in partnership with the artist's Estate**, consists of a rich body of work combining sketches, drawings on paper, oil paintings, slides and videos, many of which are on public display for the first time since their preview in Venice during the 59th International Art Exhibition – Venice Biennale.

Before dying prematurely of AIDS in 1984 at the age of thirty-seven, Stanton had begun to make a name for himself on the New York queer art scene of the 1960s by joining a group of intellectuals, writers and artists such as **David Hockney**, **Henry Geldzahler** and **Christopher Isherwood**. Stanton developed his artistic poetics around portraiture, drawing the faces of friends, family, companions and lovers – anyone he found interesting. He often found his models among the young men who crowded the clubs and night streets of Manhattan. As **Arthur Lambert**, his life partner and mentor, recalls in the monograph *Larry Stanton. Think of Me Where It Thunders*, “As they were mostly young men, they didn’t have the time or life experience to build up character in their faces, but as they look out at us, they appear attractive, self-contained, lively, and innocent.”¹ Over a few years, Stanton put together a colourful vocabulary of faces, a personal and intimate diary that tells the story of a generation of men whose lives were tragically cut short by the spread of HIV.

In Stanton’s first solo gallery exhibition, the works are arranged along the walls like a constellation of faces, looking directly at the viewer or sometimes averting their gaze to allow themselves to be freely observed, aware of their timeless beauty. The photographic cut of the compositions and the simplicity of the backgrounds, whether coloured or neutral, endow the subjects with an aura of delicate eroticism. The figures, sketched quickly using pencil, pastel and felt-tip pens, are in some cases identifiable by a simple note in the artist’s margin: *Chris, Harvey, Arthur, Robbie, Steve, Philip*. Next to the drawings and paintings, a selection of small sketches are exhibited for the first time, along with loose sheets from the notebooks the artist carried with him wherever he went, from bars to friends’ flats. He routinely wandered around **Greenwich Village** where his studio was located, a cramped space filled with canvases, photographs and art books, portraying its inhabitants almost frantically. Stanton’s minor works on paper are striking by virtue of the cinematic cut of the shots and the skilful depiction of the tension between subjects.

Although Stanton favoured male models, he did not fail to portray female subjects too, such as his older sister Laureen, the psychiatrist at St. Vincent’s Hospital Julia Mayo as well as his friend **Alice Silut**. Stanton met Alice in Los Angeles while attending the Art Center of Design in 1968. Alice fell

¹ F. Cherstich, A. Lambert, *Larry Stanton - Think of Me When It Thunders*, Barcelona, Apartamento Edition, 2022, p. 34.

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in love with Stanton and stayed with him, posing for him and helping him in the studio until his death. As she recounts in *Larry Stanton. Think of Me Where It Thunders*, "I went to Larry's studio almost every day after work and on weekends, and I'd watch him paint and help to organise and straighten out his studio, since he was kind of messy. He had a lot of artbooks and would copy out the paintings as an exercise; he loved Picasso, Monet, and especially Matisse. He used a lot of acrylic paint, sometimes oil, and a lot of colour pencils and crayons, especially Ca- ran d'Ache. He was so fast when he sketched, taking an hour or less. Larry always carried his sketchbook, so when we'd go to eat at his favourite spot, Burger Town, he'd take it out to draw people passing by or taking their coffee as well."²

The encounters, conversations and travels are recounted in the exhibition through a selection of photographs from Lambert's personal archive and a series of **Super 8** videos made by the artist on **Fire Island** between 1975 and 1979. The latter are accompanied by a playlist specially made for the exhibition by East Village legend **Vince Aletti** – a critic, writer and curator of photography active in New York since the 1970s and a passionate scholar of the international underground and queer art and music scene. The videos, like the photographs on display, are not only a rare testimony to the queer scene on Fire Island over those summers, but also a subjective look at the more intimate and private aspect of the friendship between Stanton and Hockney.

And it is in fact Hockney himself who features in the most remarkable unreleased video in the exhibition, which documents the artist as he works on his **Paper Pools** series at the Ken Tyler workshop in 1978. During his experiments, Hockney discovered the paper pulp process that allowed him to manipulate the application of colour, achieving a hybrid result between paper, printmaking and painting. This particular medium allowed him to create ever-changing effects of light and movement on water. Starting from the contemplation of Hockney's work, from which he acquired a taste for composition and framing, Stanton produced a montage of sequences alternating static images of the studio and the pool with dynamic images of Hockney at work. As a whole, the video is presented as a document of rare formal beauty, a unique glimpse into the background of one of the great British artist's most significant series.

Conceptually, the exhibition is not merely a traditional artist's retrospective: instead, **IMAGES** is a visual experience that takes viewers on a journey through a bygone world, yet one of which the vital energy continues to throb beneath the surface of the images. Each work on display serves as a gateway to the artist's private memories and atmospheres, offering not only an outlook on art, but a profound connection with an era and a zeitgeist that, although distant in time, still resonates in the soul of the beholder.

On the occasion of the exhibition, **A Visual Diary**, a visual performance by **Fabio Cherstich**, will be presented. This work is the result of his many trips around the United States, during which the theatre and opera director – known for his ability to blend various languages – rediscovered the long-lost tales of the New York queer scene of the 1980s, hybridising visual and textual content, archive documents and his own personal biography. The exceptional lives of three underground artists – Patrick Angus, Larry Stanton and Darrell Ellis – the fears surrounding the early AIDS deaths and the reflections of a community are thus brought to light through an archive of largely unpublished materials. To access *A Visual Diary* on **Friday 4 October** at **6.30 pm**, **rsvp** to art@apalazzo.net

² F. Cherstich, A. Lambert, *Larry Stanton - Think of Me When It Thunders*, Barcelona, Apartamento Edition, 2022, p. 260.

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Larry Stanton (1947, Rockville Center, Long Island, US - 1984, Manhattan, New York, US) lived and painted in Manhattan until 1984, when he died of AIDS. His most significant works date from the brief period he began in 1981, after recovering from a psychotic episode for which he had been briefly institutionalised, and for which alcohol and the death of his mother had played a significant role. Recently, the artist has been included in exhibitions: *Significant Other*, KRONE X WHATIFTHEWORLD, Twee Jonge Gezellen Farm, Tulbagh, South Africa (2024); *undisclosed sensibilities*, Flatmarkus, Zurich, Switzerland (2024); *Larry Stanton: Drawings and Paintings 1974-1984*, Daniel Cooney Fine Art, New York, US (2023); *Acne Studios loves Larry Stanton*, curated by Fabio Cherstich, Atticus, Issue 17 (Acne Paper), Acne Studios, New York, US (2023); *Acne Studios loves Larry Stanton*, curated by Fabio Cherstich, Atticus, Issue 17 Acne Paper), Acne Studios, Seoul, Corea (2023); *Soft Touch*, Galerie Sultana, Arles, France (2023); *Think of Me When It Thunders*, curated by Fabio Cherstich and Arthur Lambert, Venezia, Italia (2022); *The Male Gaze: From Larry Stanton to Now*, The Artist Room, London, UK (2022).

APALAZZOGALLERY was founded by Francesca Migliorati and Chiara Rusconi in 2008 in Palazzo Cigola Fenaroli in Brescia, as a meeting and conversation place to promote contemporary art in all its manifold manifestations. The gallery offers an inclusive multidisciplinary and multicultural programme, supporting international and Italian, institutional and young emerging artists. Each project is designed and constructed through a long and careful dialogue between the space and the artist, the product of which is a solo or group exhibition that engages the space and its architecture innovatively. The gallery also supports this dialogue through art residencies and the promotion of artists through art fairs and international and local curatorial projects. The gallery represents Sonia Boyce, Ann Iren Buan, Edson Chagas, Giorgio Ciam, Raùl De Nieves, Nathalie Du Pasquier, Emkal Eyongakpa, Estate of Larry Stanton, Paolo Gonzato, Ibrahim Mahama, Eva & Franco Mattes, Olivier Mosset, Servane Mary, Estate of Jonas Mekas, Lucia Pescador, Marta Pierobon, Nathlie Provosty, Alan Reid, Olympia Scarry, Augustas Serapinas, Alexandra Sukhareva, The Reader, Francesco Vezzoli and Luc Ming Yan.

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