

“It Gets Complicated: the Treatment of *Zayamaca* # 4 by Alvin Loving”

Image: Motion Array.

By LaStarsha McGarity and Raina Chao

American Institute for Conservation Virtual Conference 2020 Meeting
June 17th, 2020



INTRODUCTION

CONDITION



TREATMENT



LESSONS LEARNED



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Thelma and Bert Ollie Memorial Collection gifted to SLAM

LaStarsha begins her 3rd year internship at SLAM

Treatment completed

Late 2017

Fall 2018

Summer 2019

2018

Spring 2019

September 2019

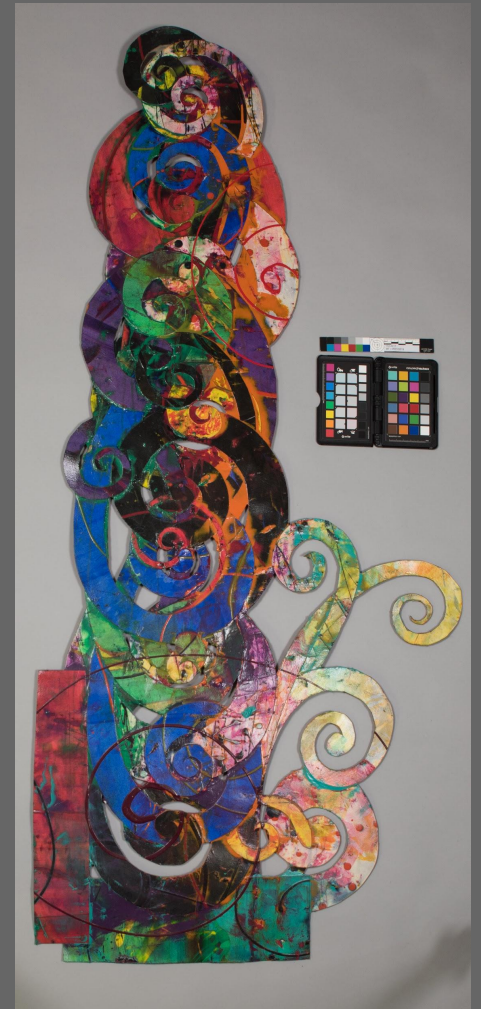
Exhibition planning begins

Treatment of Zayamaca #4 begins

The Shape of Abstraction: Selections from the Ollie Collection opens and is ongoing due to interruption by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Zayamaca #4

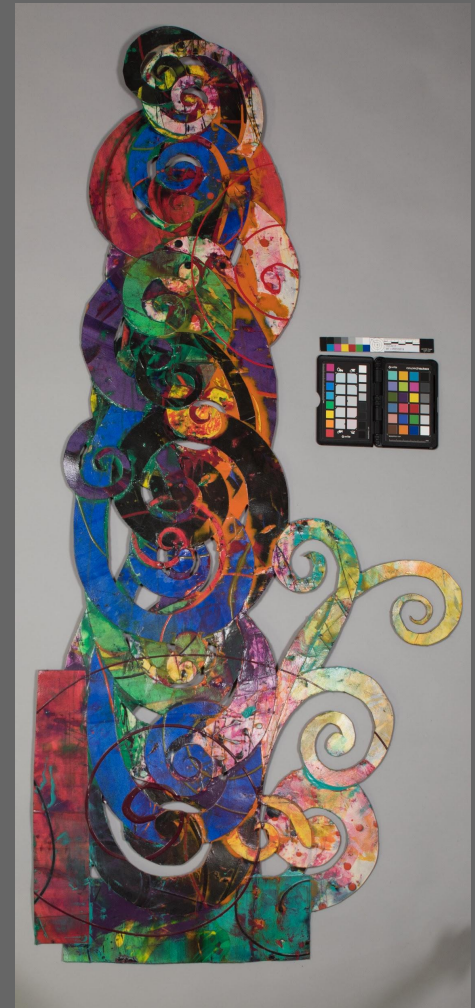


Materials

Acrylic paint

Acrylic medium

Collaged papers layers



Materials

Acrylic paint

Acrylic medium

Poly(methylmethacrylate) sheet





Alvin D. Loving

1935-2005

Abstract painter

1969

First African American
to have a one-person
show at the Whitney
Museum



Image: Alloving.com

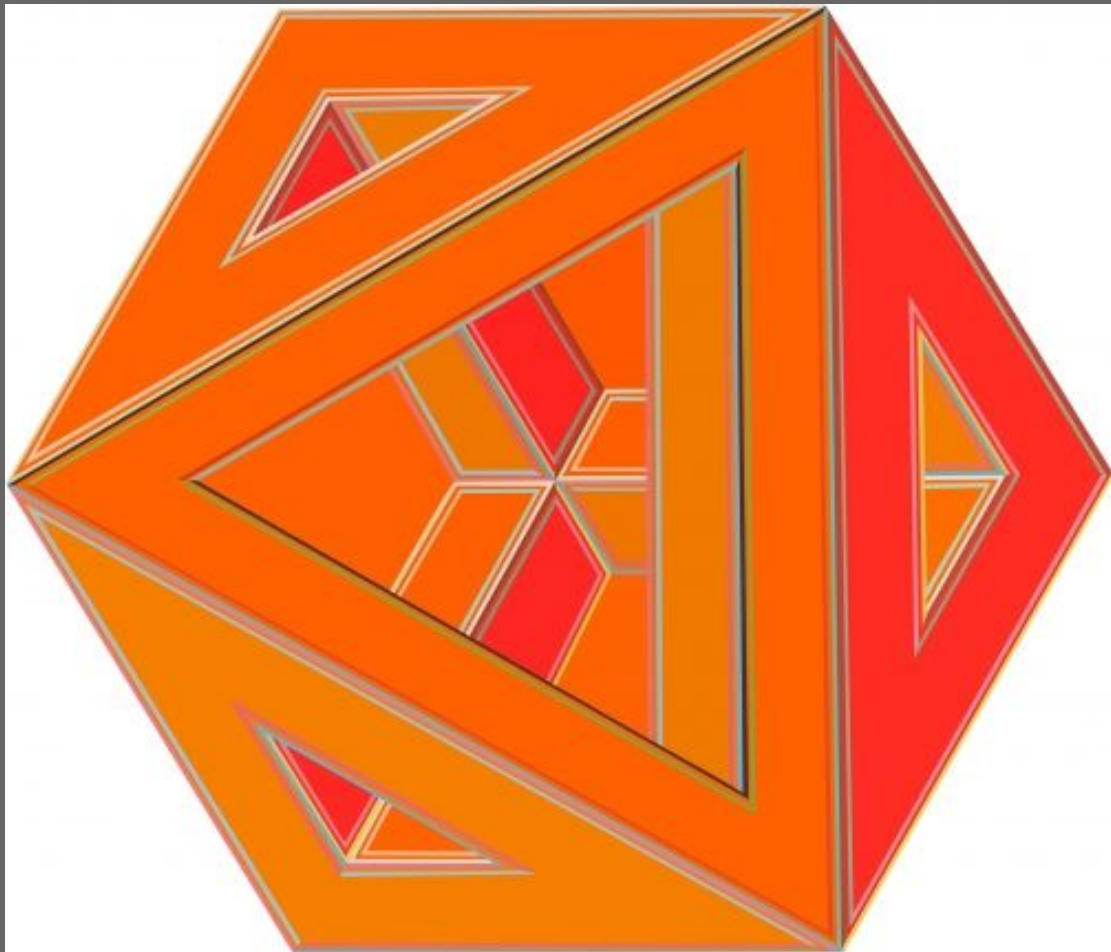
Education

Bachelors' in 1963

University of Illinois,
Urbana

Masters' in 1965

University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor



Untitled, 1970
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 52 inches



Untitled, c. 1975
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 96 inches



Untitled, 1982
Paper collage
37 x 28 1/2 inches



Humbird, 1989
Mixed media on board
72 x 100 inches







The Thelma and Bert Ollie Memorial Collection



Ronald and Monique Ollie in their Newark home. Image: New York Times.

The Thelma and Bert Ollie Memorial Collection

81 works of art
primarily by African
American artists



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Representing five
generations of African
American abstract art



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The Thelma and Bert Ollie Memorial Collection

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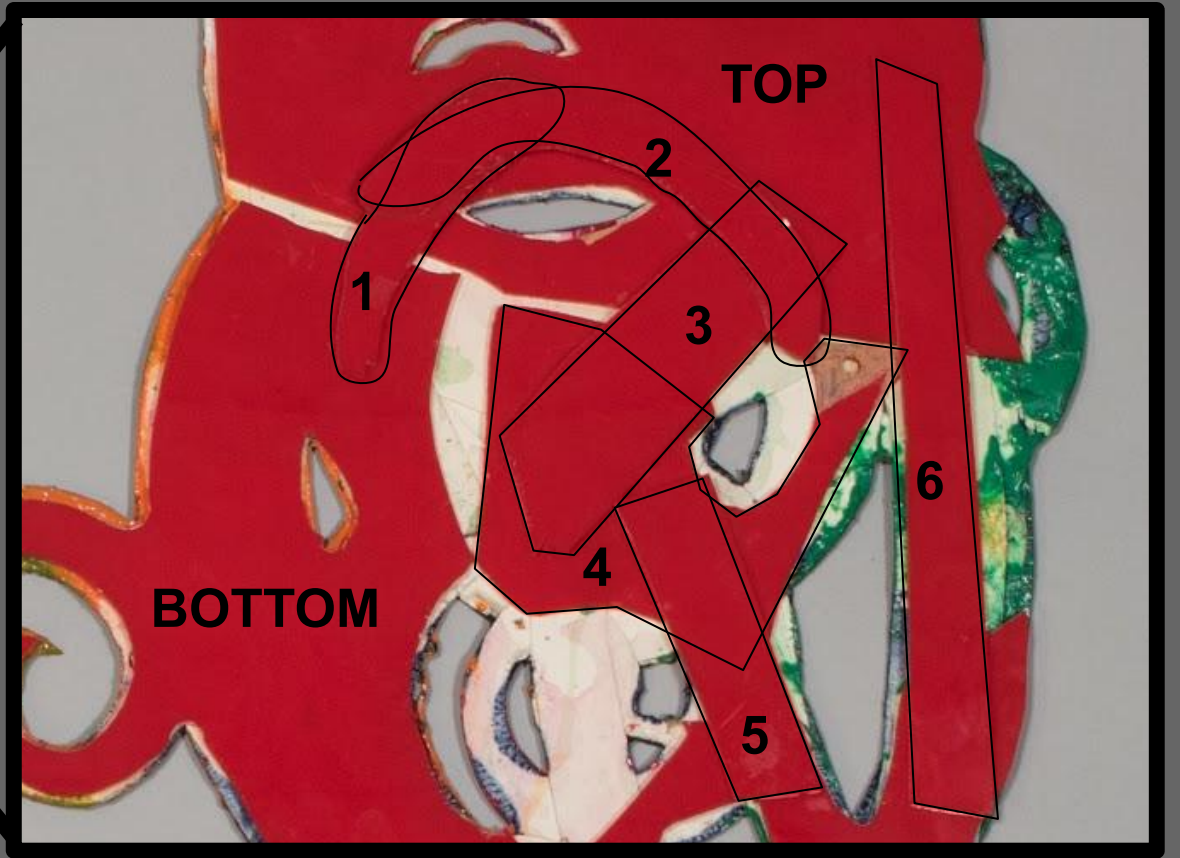
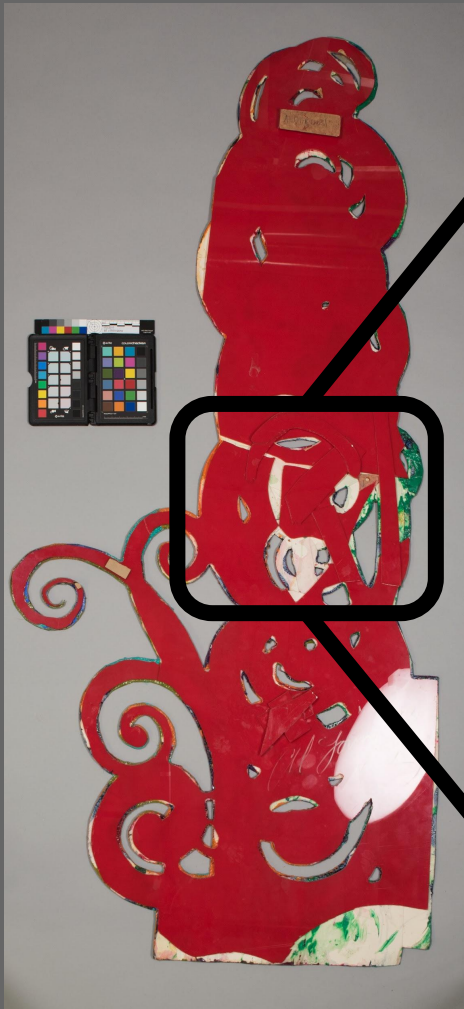
Representing five generations of African American abstract art

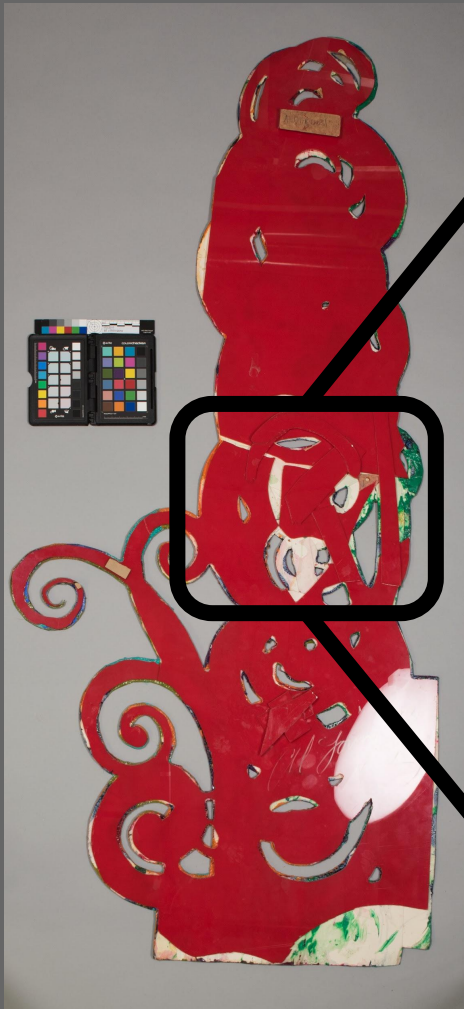
A selection of the works were featured in *The Shape of Abstraction: Selections from the Ollie Collection*

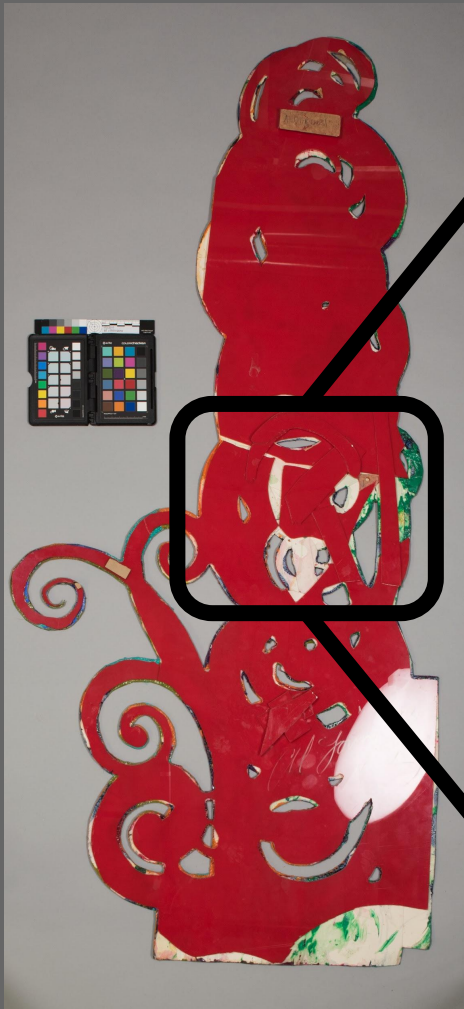


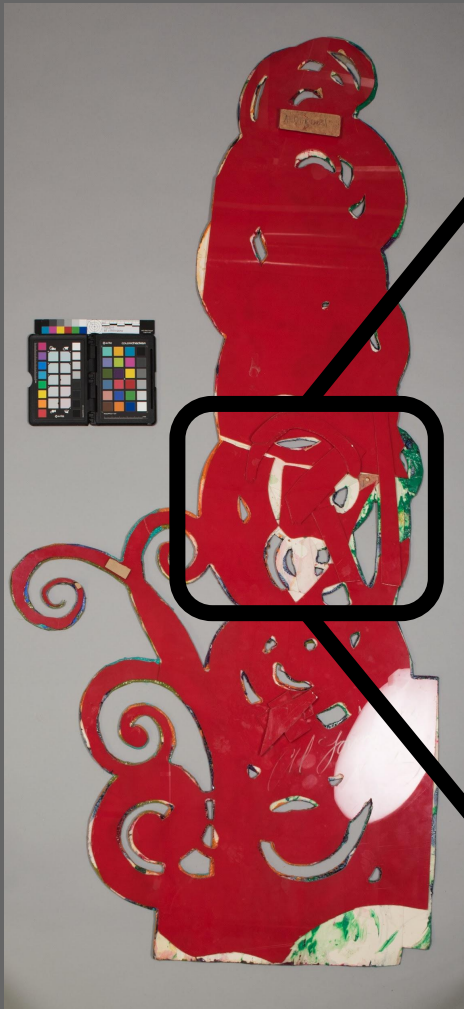
Ronald and Monique Ollie in their Newark home. Image: New York Times.

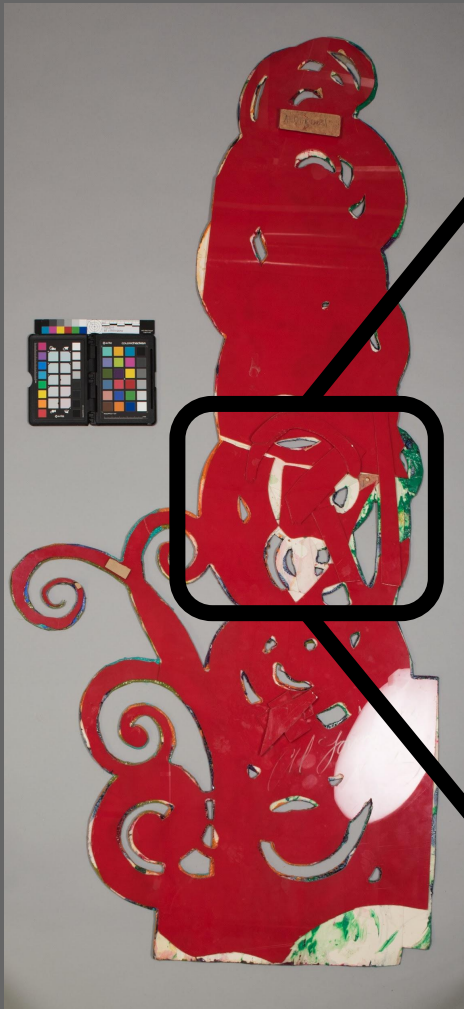
CONDITION

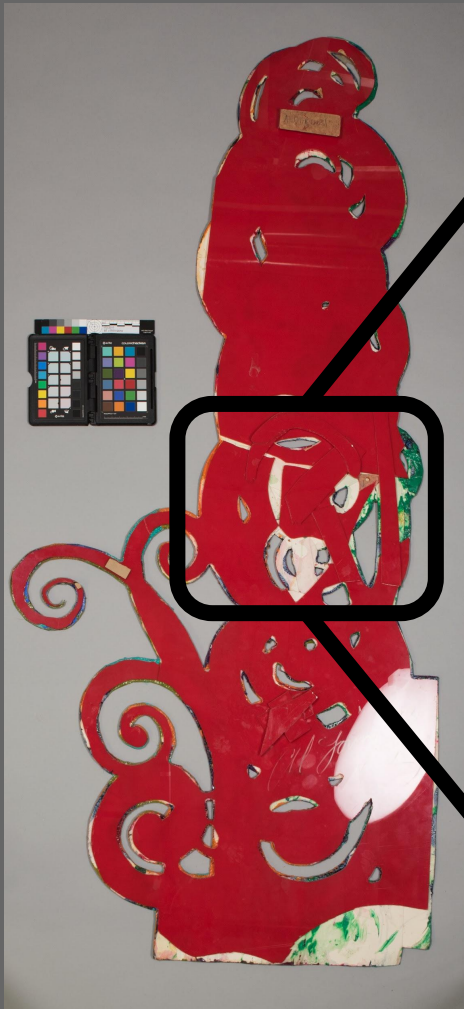


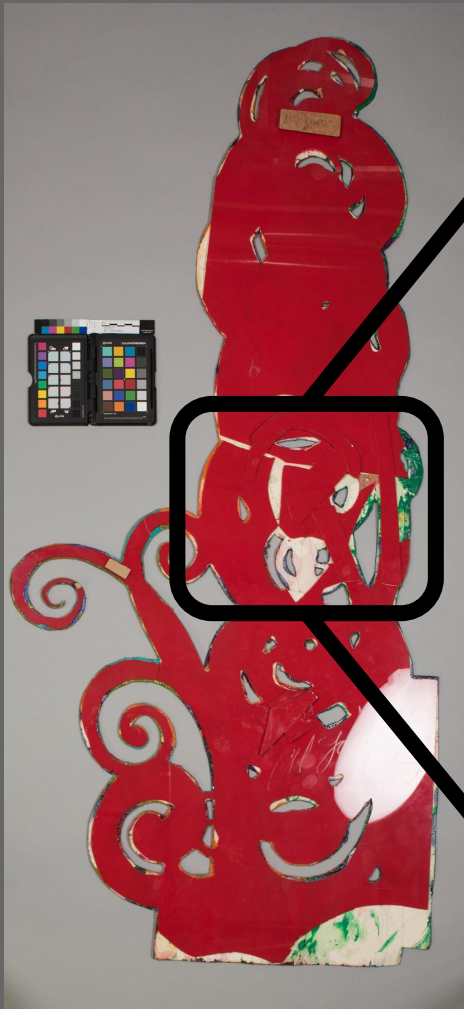














Twists sideways when handled and is the location of the original single hanging cleat



Bows downward when handled and sags inward when laying on a flat surface

TREATMENT

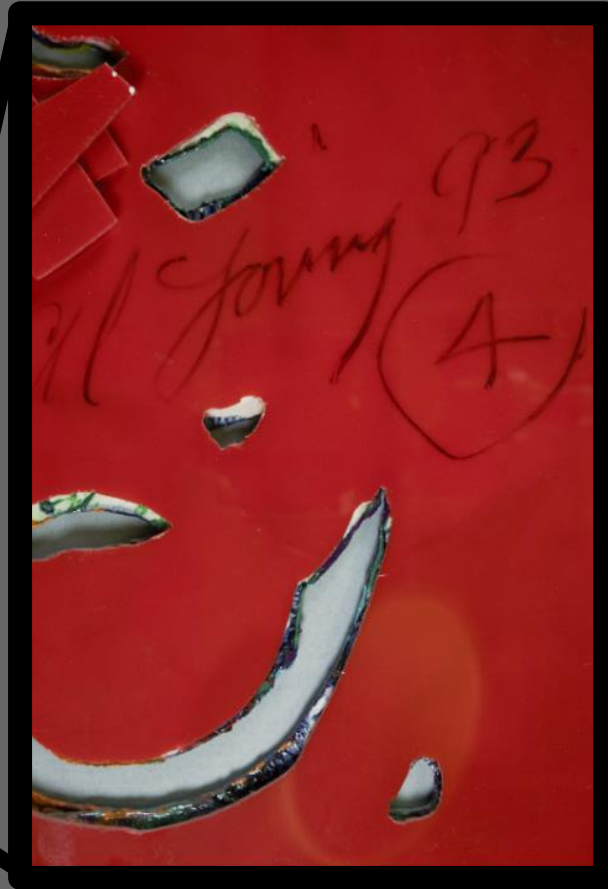
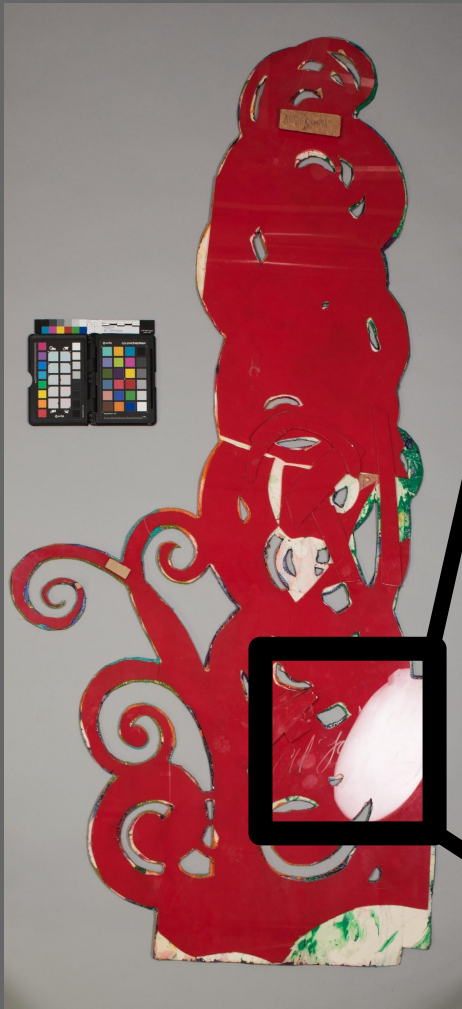
CHALLENGES IN APPROACHING TREATMENT

Paper, Painting, or Object?

We decided to approach as an object given the structural deficiencies of the plexiglass.

Inherent vice of the plexiglass

Even if it weren't pieced together, the sheet is not sufficient to support itself over span.



Loving's signature is written directly on the verso of the plexiglass with permanent marker.

TREATMENT RATIONALE

Initial Treatment Plan

- Minimally invasive
- Stabilize the structural deficiencies with a PMMA compatible adhesive

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Treatment Plan	PRO	CON
Minimally invasive	×	
Structural stability		×
Long term preservation concerns		×

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Non-Invasive Alternative

- Non-invasive
- Creation of a mount that could support the work on exhibition and in storage

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Discussions with Stakeholders

- Conservation
- Curatorial
- Installation
- Mountmaking
- Collector
- Artist's estate

CONSERVATIONS WITH COLLECTOR AND ARTIST'S ESTATE

Collector

Learned more about how Mr. Ollie developed his collection, his friendships with artists, and that *Zayamaca #4* was hung with nails additional support in his home.

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Learned more about Mr. Loving's artistic practice, his home studio, and travels that inspired his work.

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Archival Materials

Viewed archival footage in Loving's studio with him explaining and demonstrating some of his artistic practice.

Estate

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Treatment completed

- Delaminate the paper layers from the PMMA backing
- Insert a stiff interlayer
- Create a mount to improve stability

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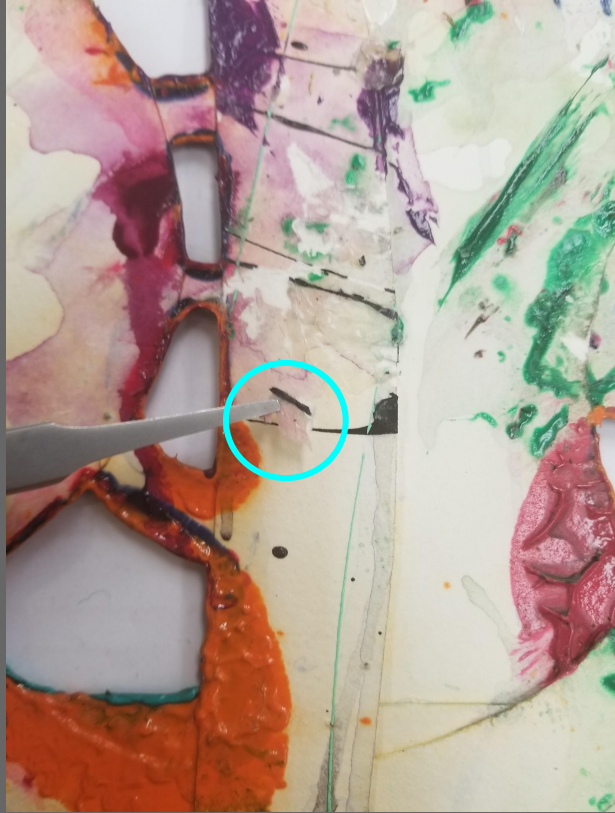
Treatment Plan	PRO	CON
Invasive		✘
Structural stability	✘	
Long term preservation concerns	✘	



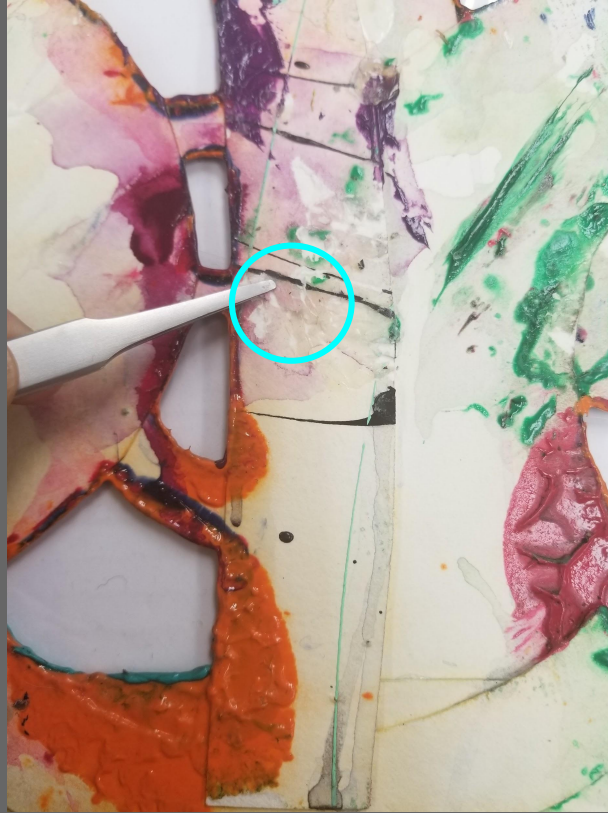
Delaminating the paper layers with scalpels, spatulas, flashlights, and a Zephyrtronics hot air pencil to soften the acrylic medium.



Unavoidable skinning occurred in the paper layers. Fragments were match by color and pattern, and adhered with 5% methylcellulose in DI water.



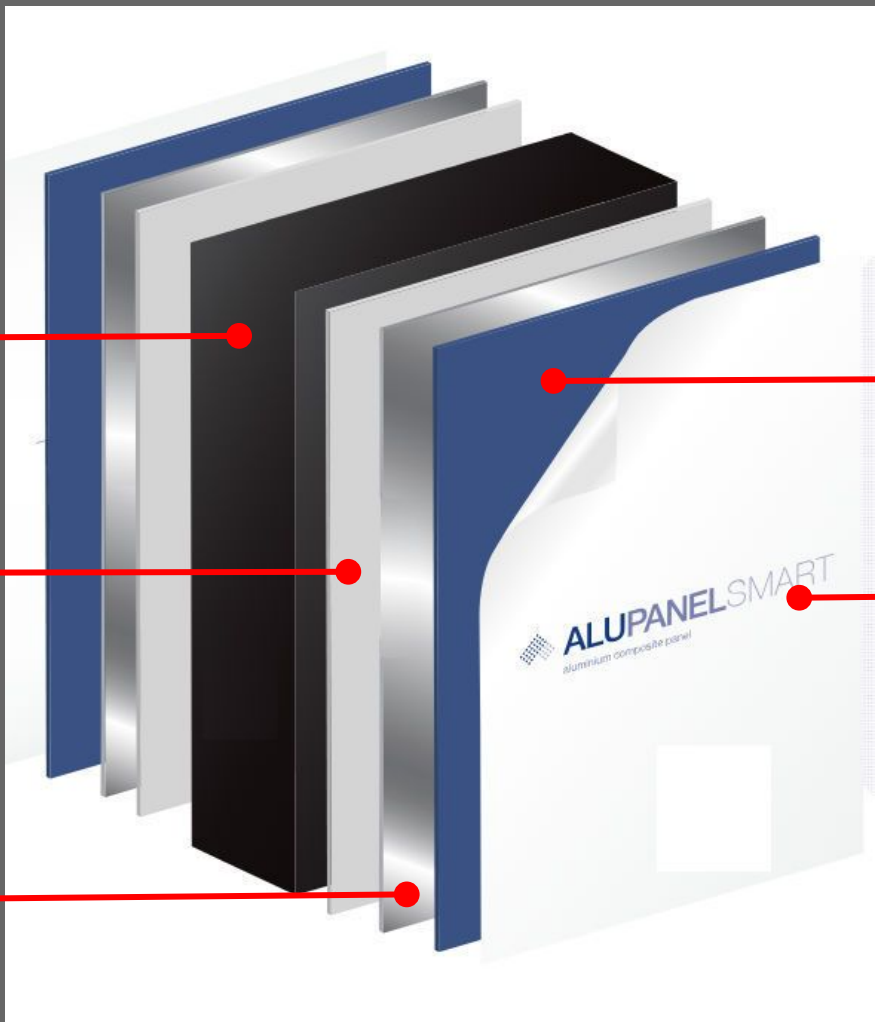
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Polyethylene core

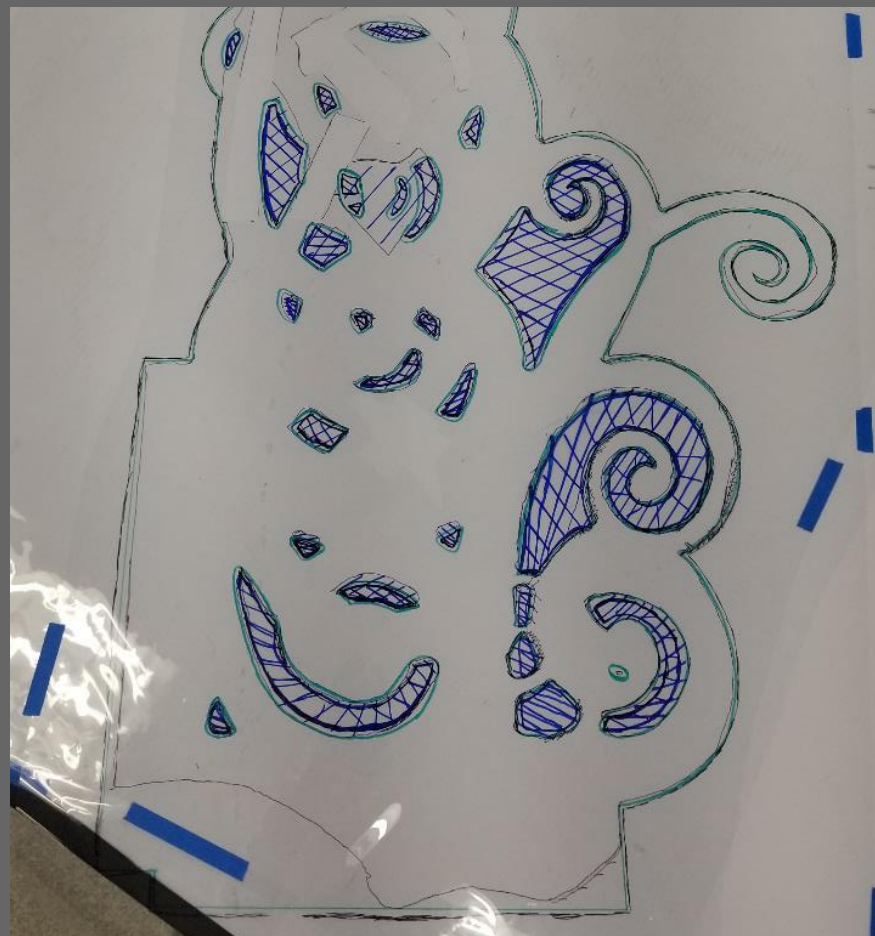
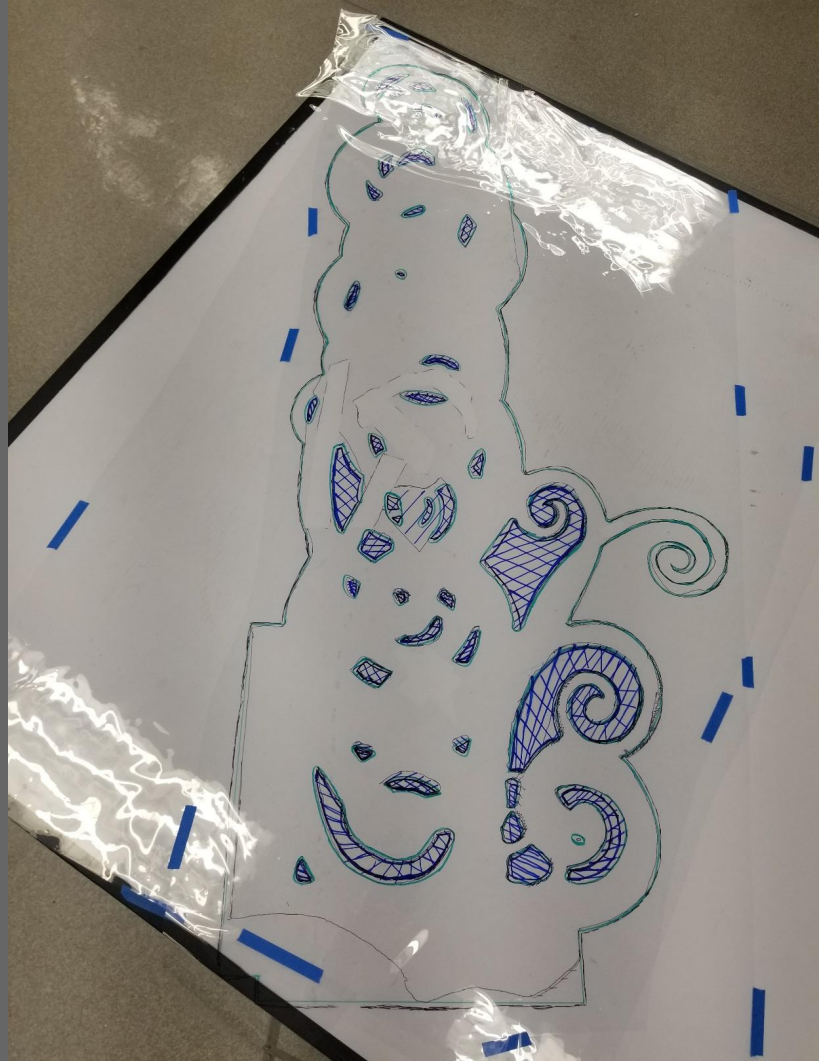


Polyester paint

Adhesive layer

Protective film

0.012" Aluminum skin

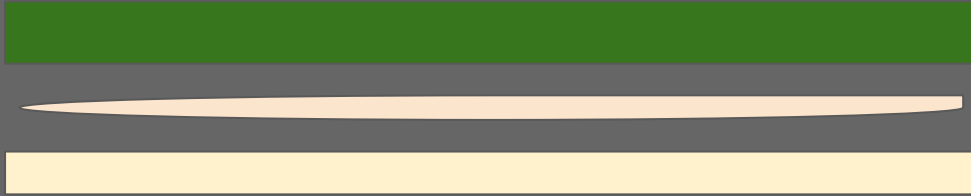




FRONT
Brush Silver

BACK
Raw Aluminium





Paper layers

Wheat starch paste and 1% Lascaux 360 with 5 mL isopropanol and bulked with cellulose fibers

Medium weight Japanese tissue



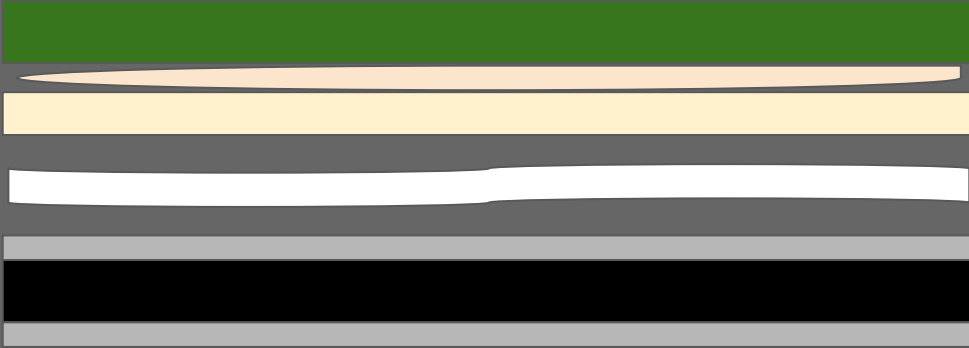
Wheat Starch paste

Lascaux 360

Isopropanol

Cellulose fibers

Detail of the verso showing the complex surface.



Paper package

2:1 Lascaux 360 and Lascaux
498 20X bulked with glass
microballoons

Alupanel



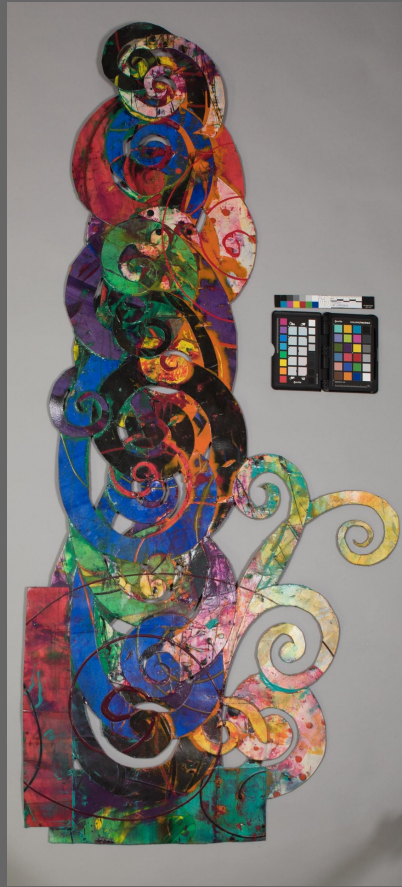
Paper and Alupanel package

2:1 Lascaux 360 and Lascaux 498 bulked with glass microballoons

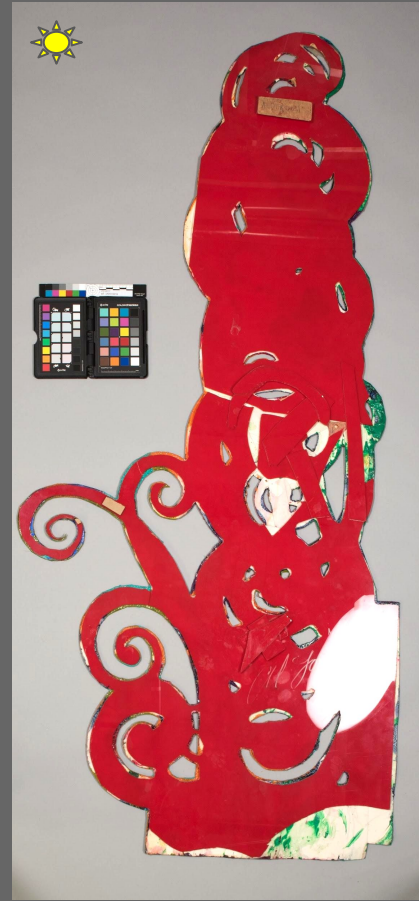
Plexiglass sheet backing



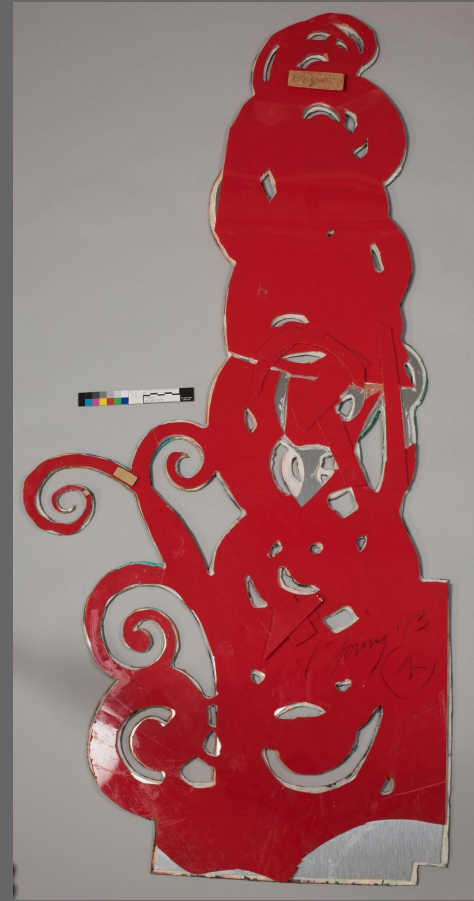
After Treatment



Before Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Alexis Assam, Saint Louis Art Museum's 2018-2019 Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellow and co-curator of "The Shape of Abstraction: Selections from the Ollie Collection," discussing a work from the exhibit just ahead of the opening back in September. Image: Wiley Price/ STL American

LESSONS LEARNED

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Lascaux 498 20X
vs.
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Learned to mitigate potential damage from incorrect adhesive choice

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Utilize resources outside of our field

The skills of Novachrome Digital Design and Imaging were crucial to the completion of this project

LESSONS LEARNED

Lascaux 498 20X vs. Lascaux 498

Learned to mitigate potential damage from incorrect adhesive choice

Unique experience

Zayamaca #4 was created by African American artist, collected by an African American collector, co-curated by African American curator, and treated by an African American conservator.

Utilize resources outside of our field

The skills of Novachrome Digital Design and Imaging were crucial to the completion of this project

Ronald Maurice Ollie 1951 - 2020



Sincere gratitude is owed to all that made this project possible:

Saint Louis Art Museum

Conservation

Hugh Shockey, Head of Conservation
Raina Chao, Associate Objects Conservator
Claire Winfield, Associate Paintings Conservator
Sophie Barbisan, Assistant Paper Conservator
Mary Culver, Conservation Technician
Miriam Murphy, Associate Textile Conservator

Installation

Christopher Moreland, Head Preparator
Tim Skornia, Mount Maker

Design

David Burnett, Installation Designer
Johnny Pelhank, Graphic Designer

Curatorial

Simon Kelly, Curator, and Head of Modern and Contemporary Art
Molly Moog, Research Assistant Modern and Contemporary Art
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Alexis Assam, Romare Bearden Graduate Fellow

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