

## Exhibition Highlight

## NEWS



Alfred Leslie's large format painting *The Accident*, on loan from the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum at Washington University in St. Louis and the St. Louis Art Museum, is on view as part of the Haggerty's current exhibition *Alfred Leslie: The Killing Cycle....*

This marks the second time the painting has been displayed in Milwaukee: in the summer of 1969, the Milwaukee Art Center exhibited the work in a group show *Directions 2: Aspects of a New Realism*. The image above, taken from the *Directions 2* catalog, shows the painting, then titled "The Killing of Frank O'Hara," in progress. Leslie had not resolved the composition in time for the print deadline: the ocean and shoreline are missing; the figure representing O'Hara is unfinished; the shadow cast by moonlight appears on the hood of the car but the moon itself is absent, as is the anagram for DEATH which would later appear on the license plate.

The canvas does retain some factual elements of the events surrounding O'Hara's death—the poet was indeed struck by a car on a beach— but Leslie combines these with allegorical devices to create a surreal, cinematically-staged scene. The three female "Furies," as Leslie terms them, were painted from a live model, yet the artist collaged various poses to create composite figures with anatomically impossible gestures. The maze-like progression of flailing bodies compressed unnaturally in space is actually organized in a series of interlocking triangles, a structure borrowed from Neo Classical painting. These moments of artificiality and disequilibrium amount to a "theatrical realism" that is characteristic of all of the paintings in the Killing Cycle.

The exhibition *Alfred Leslie: The Killing Cycle...* and the companion film *Alfred Leslie and Frank*

*O'Hara: The Last Clean Shirt* are on view through January 11.

Major support for the exhibition *Alfred Leslie: The Killing Cycle...* is provided by the Sadoff Family Foundation. Additional support is provided by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Alfred Leslie

American, b. 1927

*The Killing of Frank O'Hara*, 1969

Oil on canvas

72 x 108 inches

Image from *Directions 2: Aspects of a New Realism* Milwaukee Art Center, June 21 - August 10, 1969, p 51.

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American, b. 1927

*The Accident*, 1969

Oil on canvas

72 x 108 inches

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis and The Saint Louis Art Museum

Gift of Robert and Lois Orchard



10.9.14

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