

An abstract landscape painting featuring horizontal bands of color. The top section is a pale, hazy sky with soft yellow and white tones. Below this is a dark, silhouetted horizon line. The middle section is a deep, vibrant purple band. The bottom section is a dark, almost black, area with some lighter, textured strokes. The overall effect is a sense of depth and atmospheric perspective.

LAWRENCE CALCAGNO
(1913-1993)

REDUX

203 FINE ART

Early Modern to Contemporary



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LAWRENCE CALCAGNO

(1913-1998)

REDUX

Opening Reception:
5 - 7 PM | September 7

Exhibition Dates:
September 7 - October 12, 2024

Artwork on opposite page: *Dark Wheel II* 1962

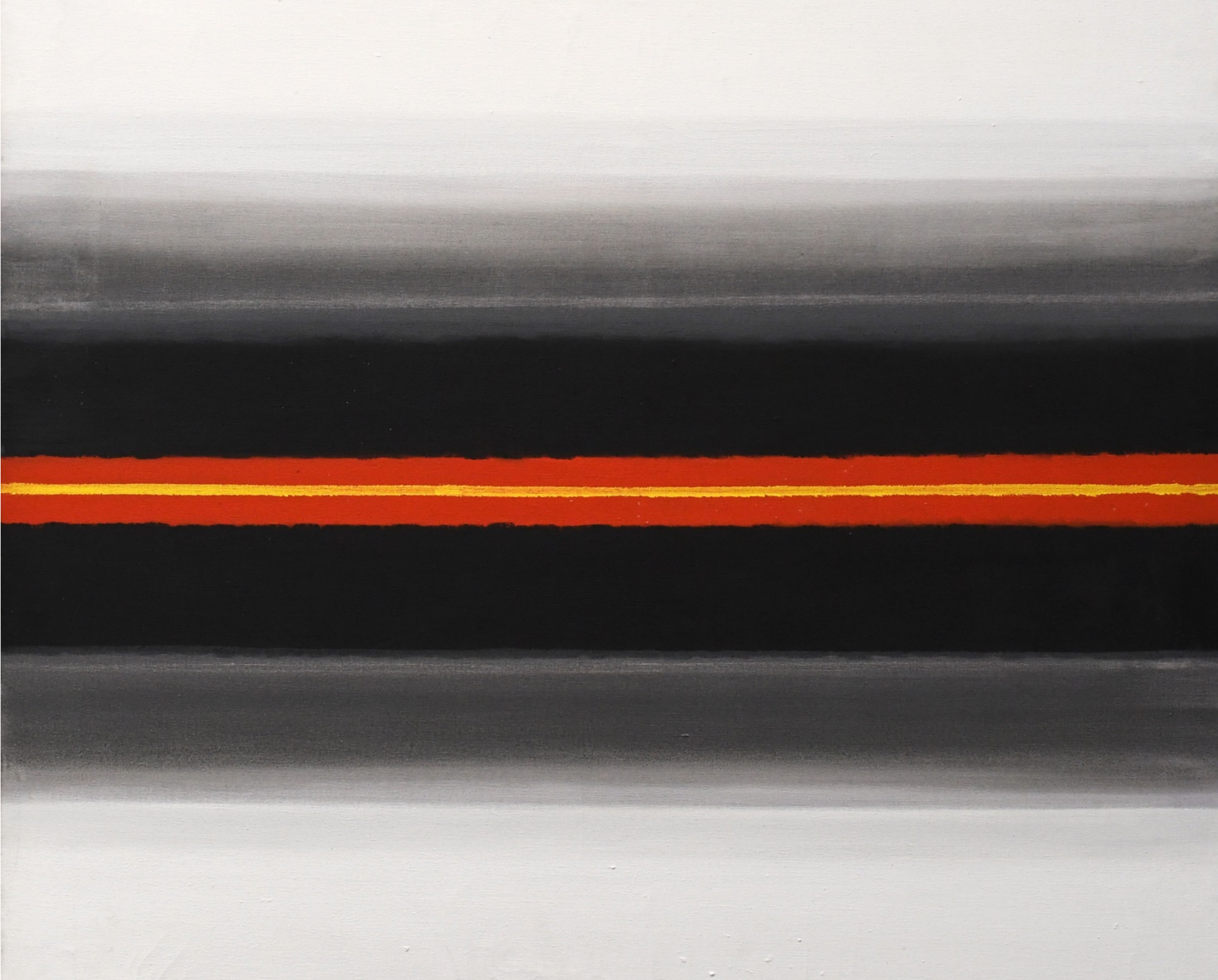
INTRODUCTION

203 Fine Art, USA, and Amar Gallery, UK, are proud to announce their joint exhibition, Lawrence Calcagno: *Redux* featuring paintings and works on paper by the LGBTQ+ artist Lawrence Calcagno (1913-1993). The exhibition is transatlantic, with 203 Fine Art exhibiting works in their Taos, New Mexico gallery, and Amar Gallery exhibiting works in London. The concurrent shows run Sept 7th to Oct 12th at 203 Fine Art, Taos, and Sept 26 to Nov 3rd at Amar Gallery in London.

This is the first time a significant collection of works by Calcagno has been exhibited in both the United States and Europe since the 1950s when the artist was living in Paris and showing his work at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York. A student of Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, Calcagno is listed as a member of the San Francisco Abstract Expressionists, exhibited with some of the most important New York School Ab-Ex painters, and was an influential non-representational artist of the Southwest, specifically in Taos, New Mexico, as a Taos Modern. This is the first time many of these works are exhibited in either London or Taos.

Detail of artwork on opposite page: *Landscape Without Time VIII*, 1965

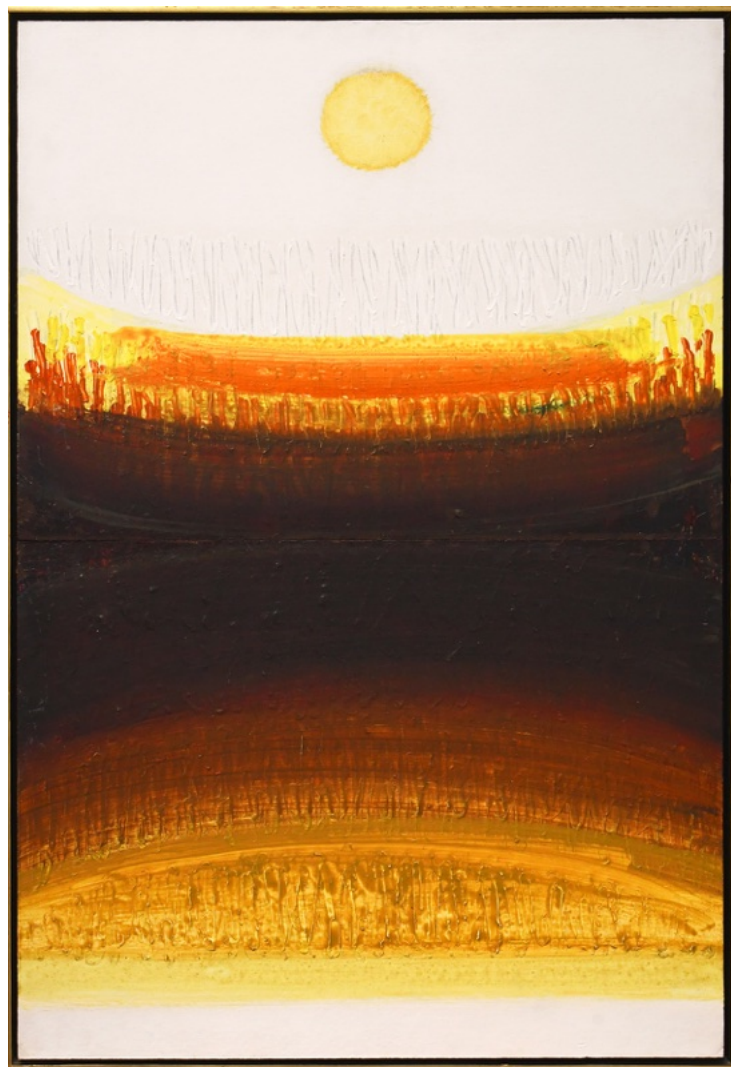
48 x 52", oil on canvas





Constellation of the Lunar Eye XXVI, 1977

22.25 x 30", acrylic on paper



Earth Legend, 1978-79
25 x 37", oil on masonite diptych

POST WAR ERA

Benefiting from the G.I. Bill in 1947, Lawrence Calcagno enrolled at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, California. His teachers were Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, along with instructors Edward Corbett, Richard Diebenkorn, and Clay Spohn. In 1950, he left the California School of Fine Arts for Europe. He went to Paris, France, to study at L'Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Beauford Delaney and Lawrence Calcagno, an unlikely pair, became friends and lovers in Paris in the early 1950s and remained close over the next twenty years. At the time of their union, both interracial and homosexual relations were illegal throughout most of the United States. Through Delaney, Calcagno became friends with writers such as James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison. Delaney and Calcagno would later go on to exhibit together including a touring exhibition through the Palmer Museum Of Art in Pennsylvania, titled "An Artistic Friendship: Beauford Delaney and Lawrence Calcagno" which would travel to several university museums and art centers around the country.

Detail of artwork on opposite page: *Untitled*, 1956

37.25 x 57", oil on canvas





Red Season II, 1962
30 x 25", oil on canvas



Sun Painting, 1978
41 x 32", acrylic on canvas



Cosmicscape XI, 1974-76
52 x 48", acrylic on canvas



Sunbands #22, 1982
22.25 x 29.75", acrylic on paper



White Painting, 1972-1989
57.5 x 45", acrylic and oil on canvas

MARTHA JACKSON GALLERY

In 1953, Calcagno returned to the United States to seek a fellowship from the California School of Fine Arts; before going to San Francisco, he stopped in New York to visit his artist friend and mentor, Clyfford Still. During Calcagno's time in New York, the artist walked into the Martha Jackson Gallery to see an exhibition of work by Franz Kline and Jackson Pollock. This is where he first met influential art dealer Martha Jackson and had the opportunity to show her his work. Meeting Jackson would become one of the most pivotal points of Calcagno's career, as the relationship that developed included an invitation for Calcagno to participate in a group show in the spring of 1954, followed in 1955 by Calcagno's first of many successful solo exhibitions at Jackson's Gallery over a span of seven years.

In 1954, Calcagno would return to Paris, sponsored by Martha Jackson, and exhibit throughout Europe, including in London at the White Chapel Gallery, garnering the attention of *Time* magazine, which featured the artist in an article titled "American in Paris." Although within this article Calcagno made some countervail statements regarding the lack of inspirational contemporary artist in Paris to emulate, this *Times* interview, arranged



Dark Wheel II, 1963
49 x 41", oil on canvas



Toward the Sea, 1966

18 x 26.5", charcoal and watercolor on paper



Untitled Landscape, 1982

36 x 30", acrylic on canvas



Diptych I, 1983

36 x 60", acrylic on canvas

PAINTING IN NEW MEXICO

In the summer of 1972, Calcagno came to Taos on a Wurlitzer Foundation artist-in-residence grant, along with friend and fellow New York artist, Hyde Solomon. In Taos, Calcagno found a similar connection to nature as where he was raised in the remote regions of northern California. With that, it became a place of inspiration, which he would come back to every summer over the next two decades, keeping a home and studio there to return to.

Calcagno quickly joined in and became involved with the modern art scene of Taos, which had been thriving for 25 years prior, starting in earnest in the early 1950s when artist and professor Raymond Jonson sponsored an exhibition called *Taos Moderns* at the Jonson Gallery on the campus of the University of New Mexico. This group included artists such as Edward Corbett, Clay Spohn, Emil Bisttram, Andrew Dasburg, Howard Cook, Louis Ribak, Barbara Latham, Janet Lippincott, Agnes Martin, Beatrice Mandelman, Dorothy Brett, and other notable artists.

Detail of artwork on opposite page: *Taos*, 1982

30 x 36", acrylic on canvas





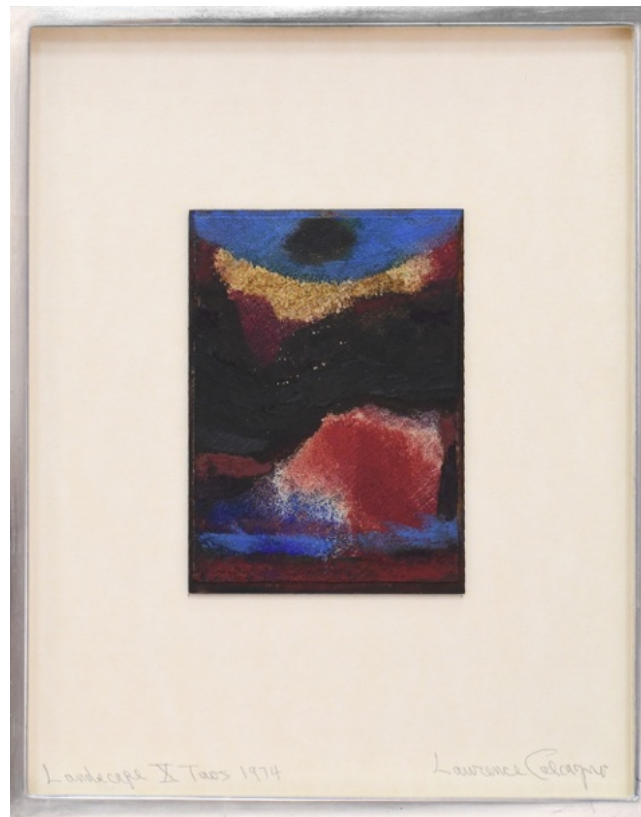
Untitled, 1982-83

10 x 12", acrylic on canvas mounted on board



Untitled Landscape, 1982

36 x 28", oil on canvas



Landscape X Taos, 1974

6.75 x 4.75", oil on canvas mounted on board

When asked what brings artists to the Southwest by a Taos News reporter, Calcagno declared *"My work has always been out to the west, Taos became an affirmation of my own relationship to nature. In New York I never painted the city....In the East, nature is clothed in a soft, filmy garment. In Taos, nature is like a raw nude. I am drawn to the high country of Taos as one is drawn to his beloved..."*

-Lawrence Calcagno, Taos News



No #4, 1955

21 x 25", watercolor on paper



Untitled, c. 1990s
54 x 48", acrylic on canvas



Sun Painting, 1975
48 x 98", acrylic on canvas



Constellation of the Inner Eye, 1979

22 x 23", oil on board



MacDowell Wood, 1972

38 x 56", oil on canvas

With several major *Time* magazine reviews and articles praising the work of Lawrence Calcagno throughout his career, with regards to his exhibitions in Europe, the solo shows at Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, to his participation in traveling group exhibitions with New York's Whitney Museum and the Smithsonian Institution, the artist was continually singled out for his talent. One *Time* critic praised Calcagno for remaining "faithful to his original landscape intentions... He has achieved a kind of marvelous chamber-music quality of a basic theme, with endlessly new and seemingly effortless variations...If one can speak of a quietly dazzling performance, this is it." In July of 2024 *Hyperallergic* wrote, "Although frequently introduced as a student of Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still, abstract expressionist painter Lawrence Calcagno was his own master."

Despite Calcagno's indisputable curriculum vitae of major museum exhibitions and gallery representations, the artist found himself confined in both his timing and identity. His arrival in New York coincided with the abstract expressionist's loss of the spotlight, forcing Calcagno's mastery of texture and interpretation of the land into the shadows. Being openly gay during a time of social exile in pre-civil rights movements meant the odds were stacked against him. However, the artist never bowed to this fate and remained outspoken for himself, and for others. Calcagno's life is nothing short of remarkable, and this exhibition aims to bring a master of art back to the forefront of art history.



Earth Constellation, 1966

69.75 x 57.25", oil on canvas



Taos, 1982

30 x 36", acrylic on canvas



Untitled, 1956
37.25 x 57", oil on canvas

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

Lawrence Calcagno was a renowned painter most closely associated with the San Francisco School of abstract expressionism. Born in San Francisco in 1913, Calcagno was a lifelong traveler. Shortly after completing high school, he traveled to Asia to work as a merchant seaman. During the war he served in US Air Force, and after the war's end he studied painting with Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko at the California School of Fine Art.

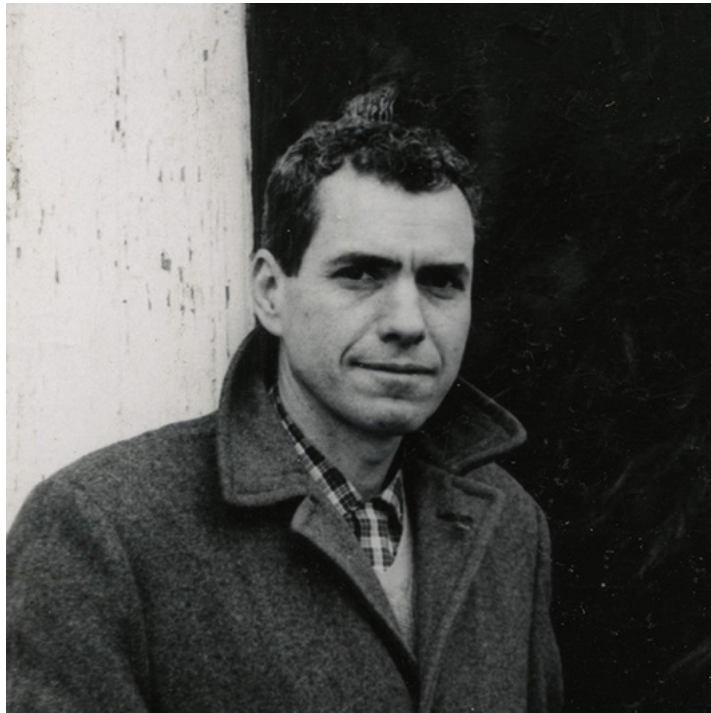
During the 1950s Calcagno lived and worked in North Africa, France, and Italy. During his stay in Europe, Calcagno studied at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris and the Instituto d Atre' Statale in Florence. In 1952 he began showing at the Fachetti Gallery in Paris, and the following year participated in a group exhibition at Martha Jackson Gallery in New York. Calcagno purchased a home in Taos after his 1972 Wurlitzer residency. During the last decade of his career, the Smithsonian Institute organized a traveling exhibition of his works on paper; two retrospectives of his work were held at the Harwood Museum in Taos and the Anita Shapolsky Gallery in New York; and he was honored with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a USIA - USSR Cultural Exchange. In 1992, Calcagno made his last visit to Taos and passed away the following year.

Campbell, S. (2000). *Journey Without End: The Life and Art of Lawrence Calcagno*. Albuquerque Museum.

Landauer, Susan (1996). *The San Francisco School of Abstract Expressionism*. Laguna Art Museum.

Robinson, J. H. (2001). *An Artistic Friendship: Beauford Delaney and Lawrence Calcagno*. Palmer Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania State University.

Witt, David L. (2002). *Modernists in Taos: From Dasburg to Martin*. Red Crane Books.



Lawrence Calcagno in Taos, NM



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