

# DOMINIQUE LÉVY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EXPLORING INNOVATIONS IN THE MEDIUM OF DRAWING IN THE SIXTIES, DOMINIQUE LÉVY PRESENTS *DRAWING THEN***

**Selection of key drawings from 1960–1969 revisits the premise of a landmark MoMA exhibition on its 40th anniversary**

*Drawing Then: Innovation and Influence in American Drawings of the Sixties*

January 27 – March 26, 2016

Poetry Reading with Mei-mei Berssenbrugge and Leopoldine Core: Wednesday, March 9, 7 PM

**New York, NY**—Dominique Lévy is pleased to present *Drawing Then: Innovation and Influence in American Drawings of the Sixties*. The exhibition investigates revolutionary developments in the practice of drawing that emerged in the United States during a decade of radical social and political upheaval.



Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1960. Pencil, oil-based house paint, wax crayon, and ballpoint pen on paper. 19 5/8 x 27 1/2 inches (50 x 70 cm). © 2015 Cy Twombly Foundation.

*Drawing Then* is inspired by—and coincides with the 40th anniversary of—the 1976 exhibition *Drawing Now*, organized by Bernice Rose at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. In her seminal catalogue essay, Rose wrote that “a number of artists have, and with increasing intensity since the middle sixties, seriously investigated the nature of drawing, investing major energies in a fundamental reevaluation of the medium, its disciplines, and its uses.” Forty years after *Drawing Now*, *Drawing Then*



fills Dominique Lévy Gallery with more than 70 works by 39 artists, almost half of whom were not represented in the 1976 exhibition.



Jasper Johns, *Wilderness II*, 1963-70. Charcoal, pastel, and collage on paper with objects. 49 7/8 x 34 3/4 x 3 1/4 inches (126.8 x 87.2 x 8.3 cm). Art © Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

*Drawing Then* features loans from The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, among other institutions, and includes works from the private collections of artists Mel Bochner, Vija Celmins, Jasper Johns, Adrian Piper, and Dorothea Rockburne. *Drawing Then* also presents two wall drawings installed on the occasion of the exhibition: the first, Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #20*, comprised of systematically drawn colored pencil lines, has been realized for the first time since its debut at Dwan Gallery in 1969. LeWitt's wall drawings demonstrate, in the words of Lawrence Alloway, "the possibility of drawing as pure ratiocination." On the gallery's second floor, Mel Bochner has installed his far less structured *Superimposed Grids*, originally conceived in 1968.

*Drawing Then* is curated by Kate Ganz. Ganz is the author of eleven scholarly catalogues on drawings, and co-author of

the exhibition catalogue for *The Drawings of Annibale Carracci*, an exhibition she co-organized as a guest curator at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., in 1999. She is currently the Senior Editor of *The Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns*, a multi-volume project to be published by the Menil Drawings Institute and Study Center in Houston, Texas.

In conjunction with *Drawing Then*, Dominique Lévy will publish a catalogue featuring essays by scholars Roni Feinstein, Suzanne Hudson, Anna Lovatt, Griselda Pollock, Richard Shiff, and Robert Storr. Each essay will address the ways in which a different movement or artist participated in changing the definition of drawing. The catalogue will include a newly commissioned work by contemporary poet Mei-mei Berssenbrugge titled "Star Being." The book will also feature rare archival material; artists' biographies; and a comprehensive chronology linking developments in the art world with the larger social and political events of the decade, including the Civil Rights Movement, Feminist Movement, Vietnam War, and widespread student protests.

### **About the Exhibition**

In the 1960s, the very notion of what drawing could be changed radically as the medium became an essential vehicle for artists giving voice to the most urgent issues of both art and the culture at large. Propelled by pressing concerns of the day—

matters of perception, time, the environment, identity, and gender—they employed new techniques and experimented with untried materials, ultimately expanding the definition of what could constitute a work of art. Robert Smithson, whose drawings are featured in *Drawing Then*, wrote in *Artforum* in 1968: “Every object, if it is art, is charged with the rush of time even though it is static.” In short, the Sixties yielded an explosion of experimentation and innovation in drawing, the ramifications of which can still be felt today.

*Drawing Then* begins with a selection of works by Josef Albers, David Smith, and Barnett Newman—postwar masters whose innovations exerted palpable influence throughout the Sixties. Albers’s elegant, minimalist lines, on view in *Reverse + Obverse* (1962), from the collection of the Whitney Museum, laid the foundation for the linear expressions of Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, and Dan Flavin, among others.

Jasper Johns’s monumental *Wilderness II* (1963/70), a work loaned by the artist from his private collection, embodies a transitional moment in the exhibition, bridging the work of Abstract Expressionist painters and the postwar rise of Pop art. Johns’s drawing is complemented by Robert Rauschenberg’s breakthrough solvent transfer drawings; Cy Twombly’s gestural writing in crayon, house paint, and ballpoint pen; and Lee Bontecou’s otherworldly abstractions rendered in soot. By contrast, the instantly recognizable imagery of Pop artists Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Tom Wesselmann—whose paintings are concertedly devoid of evidence of the artist’s own hand—are meticulously rendered in their works on paper.

Throughout the Sixties, gallerists, artists, curators, and critics sought to reconcile emerging movements in contemporary art through major exhibitions and essays. In 1962, gallerist Sidney Janis mounted the pioneering survey *International Exhibition of the New Realists*. A year later, Lawrence Alloway, the curator of *Six Painters and the Object* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, officially coined the term Pop Art, giving a name to the group of artists Janis had showcased. Together these two exhibitions signaled a profound shift in ways of conceptualizing and representing the American still life, evincing the turn toward a culture steeped in the imagery of commercialism. In *Drawing Then*, Andy Warhol’s *Heinz Tomato Ketchup with Campbell’s Soup Can* (1962) and Roy Lichtenstein’s *Ice Cream Cone* (1963) epitomize that moment by combining satire and the visual language of advertising.

In 1965, Donald Judd’s texts on “specific objects” for *Arts Yearbook 8* and Barbara Rose’s essay “ABC Art” in *Art in America* grappled with the ambiguities of three-dimensional works that defied the conventions of traditional painting and sculpture. A year later, The Jewish Museum’s



Andy Warhol, *Heinz Tomato Ketchup with Campbell's Soup Can*, 1962. Graphite on paper. 22 3/4 x 17 7/8 inches (57.8 x 45.4 cm). © 2015 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

1966 exhibition *Primary Structures* featured works by Dan Flavin, Ellsworth Kelly, and Anne Truitt. The hard, machine-like lines and reductive forms of their contributions to that show also characterize the artists' contemporaneous works on paper. Flavin's *On No. 4 of June 16, 1964*, featured in the exhibition, depicts just three lines on a black French rag paper and references one of the artist's fluorescent light installations of that same year.

Lucy Lippard's landmark show *Eccentric Abstraction* also opened in 1966 at New York's Fischbach Gallery. But in a radical contrast to the "dead-set Minimalism" of *Primary Structures*, Lippard's now-legendary exhibition showcased the work of Eva Hesse and Bruce Nauman, among others, who infused corporeality and the idiosyncrasies of the artist's hand into their art. Postminimal works on view in *Drawing Then* include Hesse's *Nine Circles* (1968), a composition of flesh-like hues and organic circles, and a group of drawings by Nauman that find the artist manipulating his own body in space.

Toward the end of the Sixties, Robert Smithson's essay "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" removed art from the gallery or museum, and Sol LeWitt's "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" removed the artist's hand from art altogether. LeWitt wrote: "If the artist carries through his idea and makes it into visible form, then all the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product." Following from works on view by both of these artists, *Drawing Then* presents Barry Le Va's six-part *Bearings Rolled (Six Specific Instants; No Particular Order)* (1966–67)—a work that is part performance and part chance, illustrating Conceptual Art's emergence and setting a course for a future of art in which disparate disciplines would commingle more freely than ever before.

### **Artists in *Drawing Then***

Josef Albers  
Jo Baer  
Mel Bochner  
Lee Bontecou  
Vija Celmins  
Chuck Close  
Agnes Denes  
Dan Flavin  
Eva Hesse  
Jasper Johns  
Ellsworth Kelly  
Barry Le Va  
Sol LeWitt

Roy Lichtenstein  
Lee Lozano  
Brice Marden  
Agnes Martin  
Robert Morris  
Bruce Nauman  
Barnett Newman  
Claes Oldenburg  
Adrian Piper  
Robert Rauschenberg  
Dorothea Rockburne  
James Rosenquist  
Ed Ruscha

Robert Ryman  
David Smith  
Robert Smithson  
Frank Stella  
Michelle Stuart  
Paul Thek  
Wayne Thiebaud  
Anne Truitt  
Richard Tuttle  
Cy Twombly  
Andy Warhol  
John Wesley  
Tom Wesselmann

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