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1992

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The Museum of Modern Art

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The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.
This exhibition is about key developments in art after modernism, as seen from the point of view of drawing. It shows how drawing has played a pivotal role in the emergence of a new language of the visual arts, particularly in the past decade. Through the work of an international group of artists in all mediums, the exhibition focuses on many of the principal tendencies that define current art. The works range from small sketches to large multimedia installations, very long pieces, works on canvas, and photographic collages.

The exhibition takes place in three separate spaces in the Museum. It begins in The René d’Harnoncourt Galleries on the lower level, and continues on the ground floor at the east end of the Garden Hall, with works extending to the Garden Café, and in The Ronald S. Lauder Galleries and Garden Hall on the third floor.

The nature and function of drawing have changed radically during the twentieth century. Most notably, the field of drawing has expanded beyond its role as an adjunct of painting and sculpture. It has become a major independent discipline with expressive possibilities altogether its own.

Yet drawing’s traditional function as the primary structural agent in the visual arts has never been stronger. Drawing’s unfinished and fragmentary character has become fundamental to contemporary aesthetics and practice. In the 1980s not just the hierarchy of mediums, but the exclusivity of disciplines and the notion of the culminating object were at last acknowledged to have given way to a new language of the visual arts, based on an expanded field of operations for each of its disciplines.

In the course of this transformation a more complex interchange between the image and its origin emerged. One of the signal elements of this change was the emergence of a “mechanical” as well as conceptual approach to image-making: the important roles played by photography, photographically derived imagery, and methods of projection have challenged the conventional idea of drawing as spontaneous and of the artist’s “handwriting” as the only measure of originality. Drawing itself, traditionally private in its address, became increasingly public as its conventions were joined to the ongoing preoccupations of contemporary art.

In the last decade or so it has seemed to many artists that modern art happened so long ago as to form a remote past. This view of modernism as a historical body carried with it a desire to redeem some of it for the present, thus bringing forth the conditions for an allegory of modernism in which the making of art is not only the primary reality but also the subject of representation.

Although modernism’s heroic myths of abstraction and universality, originality, constant invention and renewal, the culminating masterpiece, and the value of the individual “hand” are still alluring at the end of the twentieth century, modernism has become a story in itself. Its myths lie in fragments, forming a text, or lexicon, from which to choose components for a new language; and its universalizing, transcendent impulse provides an ideal ground for a postmodern art. Abstraction as a form of representation, the transgression of old media boundaries, appropriation of the original, fragmentation, layering and seeing one image through another, changing context and meaning while still alluding to the original are all characteristic of current practice.

Today there is no dominant stylistic direction, movement, or group consensus: rather, there are strategies which take advantage of different elements of the modernist text and make ingenious use of the means available. The fragmentation in current art, the glut of images and confrontation of images taken straight from advertising media, television, film, and “high” art are direct reflections of contemporary experience.

Postmodernism may be characterized as an ongoing conversation between the modernist past and the present. It is also a questioning of the ethical nature of representation, of who and what get represented and by whom. Drawing, with its acknowledged lack of finish, its transparency and capacity for over-writing, has provided an ideal means for the examination of contemporary preoccupations, such as personal development and the status of art itself, offering a new point of entry and possibility for transformation. The present exhibition explores the expanded field of drawing in the belief that the medium of drawing offers an accessible path into the changed territory of contemporary art.

—Bernice Rose
A. R. Penck builds his pencil drawings from tangled lines that sometimes suggest a recognizable figure and other times veer toward abstraction. In Welt des Adlers, abstract calligraphy interspersed with urgent scribbles suggest roundness and weight. The interplay between representation and abstraction carries ideological significance for the artist, who emigrated from East to West in a divided Germany.

For Penck, representation is tied to instinct, and the instinctual is repressive because of its long association with German Expressionism and its appeal to German national identity. He equates freedom, on the other hand, with the ability to abstract and analyze.

The nine sheets shown here are only a fraction of the 472 pencil drawings that comprise the series. Created at relentless speed, turned out one after the other, the drawings are endless variations that confront meaning with deliberate meaningfulness. Working in series has enabled Penck to render the complex twistings and turnings of his creative thought process. Each drawing, no matter how compelling its individual identity, was made and is meant to be seen in the context of the others.

As evident throughout the exhibition, many contemporary artists share this preference for serial works, taking the position that no single work of art can be expected to serve as an ultimate or complete artistic expression. Such thinking directly challenges the conventional idea of the masterpiece, whereby an artist is defined and identified by a single work.


Tom Otterness is a sculptor whose work is traditional in style, but subversive in intent. His questions about society's relentless production of destructive objects and monuments to itself. In Monument Study, whose principal subject is the production of art, tiny workmen reminiscent of the Lilliputians of Gulliver's Travels are busily constructing larger replicas of themselves. One pair fit a shoe onto the hollow leg of the reclining figure; two others, atop the scaffolding, hoist the woman's arm.

The artist conceives his narrative, sculptural figure groupings first in drawings, reducing the individual figures to one characteristic type. Employing conventional techniques of drawing, Otterness carefully outlines his figures, using curved hatch marks across their contours to suggest roundness and weight. Resembling old etchings or Albrecht Dürer's drawings, his drawing style reflects his practice of sketching directly from art in museums and copying from reproductions. Among his wide-ranging sources are Paul Cézanne, Indian art, Renaissance masters, and comic strips.

While gently mocking society, Monument Study is also a parody of art, art-making, and the act of drawing. The little cartoon worker assembling the hollow monument is a product as well as a maker of art, part of a sculpture as well as a sculptor, and perhaps a projection of the artist himself.

Francesco Clemente. From Near and from Afar (Detail). 1979. One of 20 pastels, each 6 3/8 x 3 1/2" (16.2 x 9 cm) to 33 3/4 x 13" (35 x 33 cm). Anthony d’Offay Gallery, London.

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE draws descriptive self-portraits that are explorations of bodily functions and erotic fantasies. Stirring and seductive, elegant and burlesque, his art confronts sexual taboos. Born and raised in Naples, Italy, Clemente has spent extended periods of time in India and continues to reside with his family in Madras, as well as in New York and Rome. India provides him with anxieties and exposes society’s taboos. Clemente has spent extended periods of time in India and continues to reside with his family in Madras, as well as in New York and Rome. India provides him with a link to the late antique civilization of southern Italy with which he identifies. He has said, “The gods who left us thousands of years ago in Naples are still in India. It’s like going home for me.”

This self-portrait is part of a group of twenty drawings titled From Near and from Afar, one section of an extensive series of works known as the Pondicherry pastels. (The name refers to a former French colonial port south of Madras where the paper for the drawings was produced.) Intimate in scale, the pastels reflect the influence of Indian miniatures whose sensuous lines, lush colors, and eroticism suffuse Clemente’s work. Although the two heads shown here are likenesses of the artist, they are not alike. The moustache on one inverts to become a beard on the other; the marked frown on the left is omitted from the wide brow on the right. What is most striking, however, is the feature they both display: the antler (or plantlike growth) that sprouts from their heads in a way that recalls mythological creatures known to possess ferocious sexual appetites. Gazing at us impassively, as if oblivious to our presence, the two Clemente faces unsettle our assumptions about what reality is supposed to be.

It is with these pastels that Clemente first established his method of working with fragments. Among contemporary artists, notes Bernice Rose, “The fragment is taken as both . . . the symptom and the symbol of dissolution — of the breakup of the old order, which is inevitably seen as decadence.” For Clemente, fragmentation not only celebrates chaos and decadence but also serves as a natural extension of the cultural and geographic diversity of his life.

NANCY SPERO defines her personal experience as a woman, a political activist, and an artist in Codex Artaud. A series of thirty-three long, narrow scrolls combining typewritten passages and metallic-colored cut-out figures glued onto paper, the Codex Artaud is a complex layering of visual images and written language. The title is a reference to Antonin Artaud, a French writer who was imprisoned for madness and endured years of shock therapy in an asylum. Spero became familiar with his work in the late 1960s and identified with his feelings of victimization and isolation, and his fear of losing his mind.

The detail shown here combines typewritten texts taken from Artaud with the recurring motif of a profiled head spewing out a smaller head whose tongue is extended. Spero is literally finding her tongue through Artaud. She has appropriated his self-portrait with tongue sticking out as a vehicle for expressing her own rage. Commenting on this work, the artist said, “I was sticking my tongue out and trying to find a voice after feeling silenced for so many years. I used Artaud as a means to externalize my voice as an artist, and maybe at that time I had to have that masculine voice, the most extreme example of alienation.” The individual scrolls are between twenty and thirty inches high and extend horizontally from seven to twenty-five feet in length. Formed from sheets of paper attached end to end, their fragile construction contradicts their forceful content. Spero acknowledges that the scrolls are cinematic, not just because of their length, but for the way the various images shift scales, as if a movie camera were zooming in and out. Isolated on blank stretches of paper are stamped and drawn images culled from Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Celtic, and aboriginal sources: goddesses and earth mothers, nymphs and women warriors. Working through this catalogue of female diversity and Artaud’s fractured writing, Spero creates an allegory about the impossibility of being a woman in a world not of women’s making and extends it to encompass all who are voiceless members of society.

BRICE MARDEN was known early in his career for Minimalist grid paintings with spare right-angled geometry. In his more recent work a kind of grid structure still lingers, either imposed by the artist or inherent in the motifs he chooses. Many of Marden’s recent drawings, such as Upper Garden, are meditations on nature inspired by the artist’s experience while contemplating a particular landscape or observing the patterns of shells or branches of trees. Instead of using a pen or brush, Marden draws with natural sticks and twigs, a practice that adds an element of accident, or chance, to his work. The varying thickness and flexibility of the twigs affect the flow of ink that determines the marks on the paper. The strokes of Upper Garden, for example, are thick and clotted in some places, thin and wiry elsewhere. Expressing impetuous energy, they extend beyond the edges of the paper. But on the sheet Marden controls the marks to create an even density. At certain points he punctuates the linear flow by “whiting out” inked lines with dabs of white paint.

The patterning of Upper Garden follows an almost imperceptible vertical scaffolding. It is not surprising that Marden admires and finds inspiration in the fluid vertical writing system of Chinese calligraphy. Bernice Rose has observed: “Marden returns the grid to calligraphy and calligraphy constantly to its source in nature, and round about again, in a constant discourse between nature and culture.” For Marden this discourse becomes a representation not of nature but of abstraction itself.
JONATHAN BOROFSKY
Self-Portrait. 1992. Environmental installation with chalk, pastel, pencil, charcoal, synthetic polymer paint, gold leaf, and wood numbers: 12 drawings, 1 unframed; compact disc player and animated pencil drawing titled Escalator/Giraffe on video monitor; 10 framed drawings and 1 unframed pastel, 9 x 9' (22.9 x 22.9 cm). Collection the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

MIKE KELLEY
Be Mine #1. 1991–92. Colored pencil, pencil, and synthetic polymer paint, 60 x 45 1/2" (152.4 x 115.6 cm). Collection the artist. Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York

STEPHEN PRINA
No Title/"The History of Modern Painting, to label it with a phrase, has been the struggle against the catalog..." — Barnett Newman/"Monochrome Painting. 1988–89". 1992. Ink wash on rag barrier paper, 67 units, various dimensions. Collection the artist

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SOL LEWITT
Irregular black rectangles bordered by color (Wall Drawing #697). February 1992. Colored ink wash, synthetic polymer paint, and gouache, 13' 2" x approx. 78' (401.3 x 2,377.4 cm). Drawn by Cecily Brown, Jennie Brown, Morgan Fine, and Anthony Sansotta. Courtesy the artist.

REINHARD MUCHA
Kopfdiktate (Learned by Rote). 1990. Photographs, photocopies, wood, glass, felt, and aluminum, 8 numbers 1, 2, 9, 11, 13, 21, 23, and 29 of 30 sections, each 27 1/2 x 51 1/8 x 3 7/8" (70 x 130 x 10 cm). Collection Mrs. Ackermans, Xanten.

ALLAN McCOLLUM
Drawings. 1988–92. Pencil on museum board, approx. 1,000 drawings, from 9 1/2 x 8" (24.1 x 20.3 cm) to 12 1/2 x 14" (31.8 x 35.6 cm). Collection the artist.
CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

All works are on paper, unless otherwise noted. Dimensions are given in feet and inches. Court entries in brackets, height before width, followed in some cases by a third dimension, depth, for works on paper. Sheet size is given. Credit lines indicate the lenders to the exhibition.

**FRANCESCO CLEMENTE**

Italian, born 1952

- The Pondcherry Pastels: The Sick Rose, From Near and from Aft, Silenus, Melodious, Happier than Piero, Around and Very Close. 1979. Pastel on handmade paper, 82 sheets, from 6 3/8 x 3 1/2" (16.2 x 9 cm) to 13 3/4 x 13 1/2" (35 x 33.3 cm). Anthony d’Offay Gallery, London. [Self-Portrait as a Garden. 1979. Charcoal, gold paint, and dirt on handmade paper, 24 sheets, overall 10 9/16 x 13 1/2" (251.5 x 330.4 cm). Collection Robert M. Kaye, Zürich.]

**JEFF KOONS**

American, born 1955

- Selection from Laments ("No Record of Joy"). 1988–89. Oil transfer on rubbing paper, 6' 10" x 30" (208.3 x 76.2 cm). Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York. [Selection from Laments ("The New Disease Care"). 1988–89. Oil transfer on rubbing paper, 6' 10" x 30" (208.3 x 76.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.]

**LOUISE BOURGEOIS**

American, born 1911

- Purchase from Selections ("There Is No One's Skin"). 1988–89. Oil transfer on rubbing paper, 6' 10" x 30" (208.3 x 76.2 cm). Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.

**JÖRG IMMENDORFF**

German, born 1945

- Brandenburgener Festival für Weltkunst (Brandenburg Gate Universal Question). 1981. Pencil and watercolor, 37 sheets, each 23 1/2 x 27 7/8" (59.7 x 70.5 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York and Cologne.

**MARCUS REYNOLDS**

American, born 1960

- Untitled ("I love you"). 1960. Cut-and-pasted printed papers, 6' 10" x 30" (208.3 x 76.2 cm). Collection the artist. ["Ich bin ein Ausdauerer ...". 1991. Oilstick, 13 3/4 x 32" (40.8 x 81.3 cm). Collection the artist. Courtesy Max Protetch Gallery, New York.]

**JANIS KOUNELIS**

Italian, born Greece 1936

- Untitled. 1980. Ink, 7 sheets, each approx. 8' 10" x 59" (270 x 150 cm). Sonnabend Collection.

**SHERRIE LEVINE**

American, born 1947


**LOUIS LEWIT**

American, born 1938

- Irregular black rectangles bordered by color (Wolf Drawing #697). February 1992. Colored ink wash, synthetic polymer paint, and gouache, 13 2/5 x approx. 78" (403.3 x 2.77 x 4 cm). Drawn by Cécile Brown, Jemima Brown, Morgan Fine, and Anthony Sansotta. Courtesy the artist.
A. R. Penck (Ralf Winkler)  

German, born 1939  

Queen of the Underground. 1975. Synthetic polymer paint on linen. 9' 4 1/4" x 9' 4 1/4" (285 x 285 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York and Cologne  


Fifteen Untitled Drawings. 1987. Watercolor, each approx. 8 1/4 x 15 5/8" (21 x 32 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York and Cologne  

Ehren Prell  

American, born 1943  

Say It Ain't So. 1987. Watercolor, 30" 11/16" x 43 1/4" (76.8 x 109.9 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchased with funds from the Drawing Committee.  


Street Scene: Memory of Detroit. 1991. Gouache, 19 7/8 x 19 1/4" (50.5 x 48.9 cm). Barbara Toll Gallery, New York  

Sigmar Polke  

German, born 1941  

Bumba. 1986-85. Mixed media, 8' 8" x 6' 5 1/8" (265 x 248 cm). Private collection  

Mondial". 1989. Mixed media, 10' 2" x 10' 2" (309 x 309 cm). Collection Carol and Richard Selle  

Ten Studies for Richard Wagner's Tannhauser, 1861. Pencil and ink, 15 x 22 1/2" (38.1 x 57.2 cm). Collection Jasper Johns  

Tomas Eckersley  

American, born 1954  

Nine Untitled Drawings. 1990. Charcoal, 70" x 60" (177.8 x 152.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired with matching funds from the Landscape Initiative, the Board of Trustees, and the Endowment for the Arts.  

Richard Prince  

American, born 1949  

No Title/"The History of Modern Painting. to label ..." — Barnett Newman)/"Queen of the Underground. 1975. Synthetic polymer paint on linen. 9' 4 1/4" x 9' 4 1/4" (285 x 285 cm). Michael Werner Gallery, New York and Cologne  

La Tango. 1990. Chromolithograph, oil, and gesso on canvas, 7' 6" x 68" (237.3 x 172.7 cm). Private collection  

Judy Chicago  

American, born 1939  

Pregnant Drawing. 1982. Oil, 8' 6" x 6' 1/2" (259 x 199.9 cm). Private collection  

The Trial. 1985. Oil and modeling paste on canvas tapestry. 9' 1/8" x 17' 7 3/4" (290 x 538 cm). Private collection  

La Tanga. 1990. Chromolithograph, oil, and gesso on canvas, 7' 6" x 68" (237.3 x 172.7 cm). Private collection  

José Antonio  

American, born 1926  


Codex Artaud (V). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 32" x 12" 6/8" (81.3 x 312 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (VII). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 20 1/2" x 14" 1/8" (52.1 x 316.2 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (IX). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 27" x 13" (68.6 x 396.2 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (XII). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 21" x 14" 1/2" (53.3 x 366.7 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (XVII). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 29 1/2" x 10" (73.7 x 304.8 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (XXIV). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 30 1/4" x 14 1/2" (77.5 x 370.2 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (XXV). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 28" x 10" 6/8" (71.1 x 266.7 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York  

Codex Artaud (XXXI). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 30" x 10" (76.2 x 254.0 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York.

Susan Rothenberg  

American, born 1964  

Untitled. 1967. Charcoal, graphite, crayon, and synthetic polymer paint, 42 1/4" x 11 1/2" (106.8 x 291.2 cm). The Schoor Family Collection  

Codex Artaud (XXV). 1971. Cut-and-pasted papers, typewriting, gouache, and ink, 30 1/4" x 14 1/2" (77.5 x 370.2 cm). Josh Baer Gallery, New York.
PUBLICATION

ALLEGORIES OF MODERNISM: CONTEMPORARY DRAWING
By Bernice Rose
128 pages; 60 illustrations (20 in color); paperbound; $19.95
Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Distributed to the trade by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition, Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing, this volume takes a fresh look at the role of drawing in the art of the past fifteen years. It explores the latest developments in an adventurous medium that has been at the center of the transition from modernism to postmodernism.

Through the work of more than forty contemporary artists the author describes the advent of a new language of art in which drawing plays an expanded role, as both fragment and finished work. She discusses the resurgence of gestural drawing, new approaches to collage and montage, issues raised by drawings of exceptionally large scale, changes in the historical relationship between drawing and sculpture, the introduction into drawing of technological means such as photography and print, the influence of video, and drawing's change from a private to a public mode.

The book is handsomely illustrated with more than sixty works by all the artists in the exhibition. Biographies of the artists and a selected bibliography complete the volume.


PUBLIC PROGRAM

CONTEMPORARY DRAWING
Tuesday, February 18, 8:30 p.m.

In conjunction with the current exhibition, artists Günther Förg, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine, and Allan McCollum discuss their work. Moderated by Bernice Rose, Senior Curator, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2
Tickets $8; members $7; students $5.

Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing has been organized by Bernice Rose, Senior Curator, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art.

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