

The Museum of Modern Art

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DRAWING NOW: 1955-1975

MAJOR WINTER EXHIBITION OPENS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

DRAWING NOW: 1955-1975, an international survey of contemporary drawing focusing on its emergence as a major and independent means of expression, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from January 23 through March 9. Directed by Bernice Rose, Curator of Drawings, the exhibition consists of some 175 works by 46 artists, and will include several large pieces drawn on the walls of the Museum galleries. Following the New York showing, the exhibition will tour abroad under the auspices of the Museum's International Council. The show was made possible by the support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Given the radical history of modernist art, drawing has until recently been regarded as a conservative medium, resistant to ideas of innovation or extension," Ms. Rose says in the book* published by the Museum on the occasion of the exhibition. "As a discipline it has with few exceptions remained within parameters basically defined by the end of the seventeenth century.

"However, during the past twenty years 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 uses.

"With this process of reevaluation and renewal, drawing has moved from one context, that of a 'minor' support medium, an adjunct to painting and sculpture, to another, that of a major and independent medium with distinctive expressive possibilities altogether its own."

The survey begins with the generation that included Jasper Johns and

*DRAWING NOW by Bernice Rose, 96 pp, 83 black-and-white illustrations, 4 color plates. \$4.95 (paperbound). Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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Robert Rauschenberg. Among the 10 works by Johns in the exhibition is Diver, 1963, a 7-x 6-foot work which Ms. Rose characterizes as perhaps the most ambitious drawing of the past twenty years, and, as is Seurat's Portrait of Aman-Jean, "a manifesto of the independence of draftsmanship." In addition to the famous Erased de Kooning drawing of 1953, Rauschenberg is represented by the Thirty-four Drawings for Dante's "Inferno" of 1959-60, a series monumental in scope and cinematic in its frame-by-frame unfolding of the narrative.

Some artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Roy Lichtenstein, David Hockney, and Jim Dine have exploited the tradition of drawing in their work of the past two decades. Oldenburg's Nude: Three-Way Plug, 1967, strongly evocative of a nineteenth-century Salon picture, is "a deliberate return to tradition and quotation of grand style as a liberating device," Ms. Rose observes.

Lichtenstein is represented by 15 works, including his series of bull collages inspired by van Doesburg's famous reduction of a naturalistic cow to a purely abstract schematization. "However, Lichtenstein starts from a different point, an image already placed within the art context, and proceeds to make it even 'artier,'" Ms. Rose notes.

Also included are drawings from the sixties by Minimal artists and sculptors such as Donald Judd and Dan Flavin, who then made drawings in preparation for works in other mediums but have since turned to drawing for its own sake. The Minimal artist Robert Morris, who calls for an art that is more intimate in relation to the body, has drawn a work entitled Traveling Limit of Reach on the 60-foot wall leading to the galleries. He engages both hands and feet in the drawing process.

Sol LeWitt's white-on-black drawing, Lines from the Center, the Corners and Sides, was executed on the 10-x 17-foot wall in the Museum's Main Hall. Because

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LeWitt maintains that the idea is more important than the result, the work was planned by the artist but executed by his assistants following his systems. Other wall works are being created for the exhibition by Mel Bochner, Dorothea Rockburne, Richard Tuttle and Robert Ryman.

One of the largest drawings included is Richard Serra's 9 1/2 x 17 2/3-foot Abstract Slavery, one of his works from the mid-seventies, intended as a two-dimensional analogue of the steel and lead plates of his large outdoor sculptures.

Among the Conceptual works shown are pieces by Carl Andre, Hanne Darboven, and Lawrence Weiner. The American Cy Twombly and the German Joseph Beuys, whose works are influenced in different ways by the major twentieth-century innovation in drawing, surrealist automatism, are represented by 6 and 12 works respectively. The Beuys group dates from 1955 to 1970 and is mostly borrowed from European museums.

The majority of the artists in the exhibition were born in the 1930s or '40s and all but three artists are living. While most live in the United States, other countries represented include Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Belgium. Only one group is represented, Art and Language, which originated in Great Britain.

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