

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

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SIX AMERICAN ARTISTS SHOW DRAWINGS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW WORK ON PAPER 3, the third in a series of exhibitions devoted to exploring the dynamic, changing role of contemporary drawing, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on June 27, 1985. Organized by Bernice Rose, curator, Department of Drawings, the exhibition includes over fifty works by mature artists whose diverse approaches to and uses of drawing challenge our own responses to the work. The exhibition, which remains on view until September 3, shows the work of six American artists through a selection of their recent or rarely seen drawings.

The exhibition features work by Americans who are well known for their work in other areas: Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman are sculptors; James Rosenquist, Robert Ryman, and Pat Steir are painters; and Robert Wilson is known primarily as a performance artist. Their works range from traditional drawings, either independent of or related to major works in other media, to drawings on atypical surfaces such as aluminum or fiberglass panels.

The successive exhibitions in the NEW WORK ON PAPER series, which was introduced in 1981 to critical acclaim, can be considered an ongoing dialog that reflects the concerns of artists working today. The series has been conceived to present some of the freshest, most experimental, and vibrant examples of drawing, without intending to offer an historical overview or indicate an emerging style. Rose writes in the book accompanying the exhibition,* "Without exception...the artists included are presented not as a definitive choice of outstanding

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contemporary talents, but as a choice, limited by the necessities of space, of only a few of those whose achievement might warrant their inclusion--a choice, moreover, that is entirely the responsibility of the director of the exhibition."

Each of the artists represented in the current exhibition has interpreted a variety of themes. Some of these themes are related to traditional drawing, while others are specific to the artists' personal view of the medium as an expressive form. As a result, Rose states, "none (of the drawings) could have been anticipated or expected."

Morris, who first came to prominence during the sixties for his Minimalist works, has more recently shifted his focus to apocalyptic visions of nuclear or natural disaster. This is suggested by his major cast-fiberglass work on view, an untitled rock drawing (1985), and a new group of related drawings from the ongoing Blind/Time series, executed through a vigorous yet controlled gestural process. In a similar way, Nauman's large drawings also indicate an active, physical involvement with the work. Frequently exploring such themes as dreams, violence, and death, his works on view may serve as fabrication drawings for neon sign sculptures or environmental pieces, drawings after sculptures, or word drawings.

Like Morris, Ryman emerged in the late sixties as one of the leading Minimalist painters. He continues to refine his characteristic monochromatic white paintings in beautiful new variations. Although he seldom makes drawings, he has undertaken for this exhibition a reexamination of the possibilities of drawing for its own sake. According to the artist's specifications, his seven ink-and-enamel drawings on

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aluminum, of varying size, must inhabit space in a very particular way. "Its essence," Rose explains, "is dependent on placement and unique presence." If Ryman's work is deliberate and precise, Steir's new drawings are deliberately gestural. Both a poet and a painter whose mature work began around 1981 with ideas that continue to the present, Steir describes her works as "terrifically athletic." For the exhibition, she has created three fourteen-foot-long drawings on the theme of water; the surface of one is so heavily worked in pencil that it feels as materially solid as a sheet of lead.

Rosenquist, one of the original Pop Art painters, continues to use the powerful images found on billboards and in magazines, newspapers, and photographs he has taken himself. On view will be five drawings and several paper constructions (1985) in which disparate images are freely associated and assembled. Wilson has made drawings to help him visualize the scenic conditions for his theatrical presentations. A performance artist and producer trained as an architect and a painter, Wilson is now at work on a major production of Wagner's Parsifal. In his drawings created for the exhibition, however, he has moved beyond making drawings as dramatic studies. Rose states, "Wilson likes drawings as drawing... He likes the sensual quality and probably the privacy. The grand designs that can only be accomplished with the collaboration of hundreds of people here find their private beginnings and their summation."

The publication accompanying the exhibition is conceived as a collection of drawings especially created by the artists for the book. Each of the six artists devised his or her own solution for illustration, addressing the problems inherent in reproducing works

of art, especially in the case of large-scale drawing. New Work on Paper 3 includes, for example, newly created works unlike those shown in the exhibition, cut-out portions or details of very large drawings, and fold-out pages designed to simulate the artist's usual drawing format. The book also includes an introduction by Bernice Rose and biographies of the artists.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Video Program will present SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN VIDEO, a series of tapes that suggest links between the video medium and contemporary drawing. Artists whose works are represented--including Peter Campus, Paul Cos, Howard Fried, Joan Jonas, Tom Marioni, and Bruce Nauman--play with the sense of intimacy and shallowness of pictorial field in video to produce work that is simple in gesture but rich in spirit and feeling. The program will be shown in the First Floor Video Gallery from July 4 to September 3.

The exhibition has been organized with the aid of grants from Robert L. B. Tobin and the National Endowment for the Arts. The publication is made possible by a generous grant from Asher Edelman.

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*Publication: New Work on Paper 3. Preface and Introduction by Bernice Rose, curator, Department of Drawings. Drawings executed specifically for the publication by Bruce Nauman, James Rosenquist, Robert Ryman, Pat Steir, and Robert Wilson. Details of drawings by Robert Morris. Artists' biographies. 34 black-and-white illustrations. 100 pages. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. \$12.50.

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