

The Museum of Modern Art

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ALLEGORIES OF MODERNISM: CONTEMPORARY DRAWING

February 16 - May 5, 1992

ALLEGORIES OF MODERNISM: CONTEMPORARY DRAWING, opening at The Museum of Modern Art on February 16, 1992, provocatively explores developments in drawing since the mid-1970s. Following **DRAWING NOW**, the Museum's pioneering exhibition of 1976 that documented the emergence of drawing as a major and independent means of expression, **ALLEGORIES OF MODERNISM** records the important and multifaceted role of drawing in art today.

Organized by Bernice Rose, senior curator in the Museum's Department of Drawings, the exhibition includes some 200 works by more than forty artists from the United States and Europe. It is installed in the René d'Harnoncourt Galleries on the Museum's lower level, the third-floor Drawings Galleries, the Garden Hall and Projects Gallery, and throughout several of the Museum's "public" spaces.

The exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from Mr. and Mrs. Ronald S. Lauder. Additional support has been provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, The Bohen Foundation, The Tobin Foundation, and The Solow Foundation.

Many artists today are engaged in questioning the nature and the limits of drawing. Using a wide and often adventurous array of materials and techniques, they ask not only what drawing is, but what differentiates drawing from other activities. Indeed, as Bernice Rose writes in the publication

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accompanying the exhibition, "the formal purity of drawing is not an issue, nor is it of much concern to artists....Although increasingly an independent mode, [drawing] has also become inextricably mixed with other mediums, with painting and painterly devices, with color, and with paint itself. Distinctions between painting and drawing -- and printing -- have become blurred....A new language of the visual arts has thus emerged in the last two decades based on an expanded field of operations for each of its disciplines...."

This "expanded field of operations" is evident in the wide array of works in the exhibition, and in the issues they raise. The relationship of art to mechanization and technology -- an issue that is germane to so much art today -- is raised by Nancy Spero and Christopher Wool's rubber-stamped pieces, which inhabit the region between drawing and printmaking, and by Jonathan Borofsky's site-specific installation, in which he uses a technique known as rotoscoping to translate drawing into video. Postmodernism's preoccupation with the fragment, the "unfinished" artwork, is evident in both Bruce Nauman's photocollage and Francesco Clemente's installation of individual pastel drawings, which places the fragment into a new context. The once commonly held distinction between drawing and painting is brought into question by works on canvas by Julian Schnabel, Richard Prince, and others. The relationship of art to its surroundings is explored in room installations by Allan McCollum, Stephen Prina, Mike Kelley, and Sigmar Polke, for whom, as Rose writes in the accompanying book, "the exhibition has become a form of discourse."

Included as well are examples of more traditional drawings, some in the form of notebooks and study drawings, by Tom Otterness, Robert Longo, Terry

Winters, Martin Puryear, and others. Also exhibited are works by Martin Kippenberger, Jannis Kounellis, Sherrie Levine, Ellen Phelan, Tim Rollins + K.O.S., and Susan Rothenberg, among others. (A list of artists is attached.)

An allegorical approach that is expressed in the contemplation of the self, the body, society, the limits of modernism, and drawing's relation to its own past at once unites the diverse works in **ALLEGORIES OF MODERNISM** and makes them paradigms of the concerns and possibilities being probed by so many artists today.

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PUBLICATION

Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing by Bernice Rose. 128 pages. 49 black-and-white and 20 color illustrations. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Paperbound, \$19.95, available in The MoMA Book Store. Distributed to the trade by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.