

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

George Condo: Ink Drawings

11th February – 5th April 2014



George Condo, *Standing Bather*, 2013
ink, gesso and charcoal on paper
82.5 x 60.75 in. (209.6 x 154.3 cm.)
© George Condo
Courtesy of Skarstedt

Skarstedt London is delighted to announce an exhibition of new works on paper by American artist George Condo, to coincide with a solo exhibition at Simon Lee Gallery from 11th February 2014. This will be the artist's third solo show at Skarstedt and the first at the new London gallery, which follows his acclaimed retrospective *George Condo: Mental States*, at the Hayward Gallery, London in 2011- 2012.

Since the beginning of his artistic career, drawing and works on paper have formed an important part of George Condo's working practice. Featuring monumental works on paper this exceptional series, realised over a six-month period, marks an exciting new area of focus for Condo.

"My intention with this body of work was to explore the extreme possibilities of ink on paper. I used the medium to create transparent layers of colors. I thought of Rothko at times and his overlapping veils of transcendental space. I placed the figure into this kind of space and used lines to define their ambiguous presence in the void."

Following his pivotal exhibition of *Drawing Paintings* at Skarstedt New York in 2011, Condo has explored the relationship between the directness of drawing and the controlled methods of painting. The new works on paper are characterised by a dark brooding palette and a return to the figurative in subject matter. Marking a deliberate move away from the abstract tendencies of previous work, this series heralds the beginning of a new stylistic engagement with a traditional subject in which the drama of the works is intensified by their impressive scale.

In *Standing Bather*, 2013 the female nude positioned centre of the composition embodies an angelic purity against the tempestuous background of dark browns and black. Through his elongation of the female form to grand dimensions and his application of gesso onto the paper, Condo imbues the figure with a sculptural quality and magnifies her figurative presence. Here as in other works in the series, the wash of colour dripping down the surface of the paper underscores the gestural freedom and spontaneity of drawing which Condo has embraced in this new body of work.

Mirroring the continual dialogue between Condo's drawings and paintings, the simultaneous exhibitions at Skarstedt and Simon Lee reflect the collaborative approach of both galleries to presenting Condo's work. Continuing in the vein of Condo's synthesis of both drawing and painting within his oeuvre, the concurrent exhibitions in London further the artist's on-going exploration of both mediums.

With a career spanning over three decades, George Condo is one of the leading talents to emerge out of the New York art scene in the 1980s. Alongside his contemporaries Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, Condo was a key figure in the revival of painting and drawing as a vehicle for expression. A talented draughtsman and an adept handler of paint in the tradition of the old masters, in his new body of work Condo continues to develop his highly distinctive and original style. The subject of major exhibitions at leading institutions worldwide, George Condo's work has been exhibited at The New Museum, New York; Hayward Gallery, London; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam and the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt amongst others and is held in numerous important public and private collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

About the Artist

George Condo was born in New Hampshire in 1957. Ranging from painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture, his work is informed by the inherited European tradition of art making. Incorporating a hybridization of classical influences, such as Raphael, Goya, Velazquez, Picasso and Manet, his work demonstrates a distinctive style which he coined "Artificial Realism" in the early 80s when he emerged as painter on the New York art scene. This original painterly language has greatly influenced the generation that follows him. Often called 'an artist's artist', Condo has stood as an example to younger practitioners through his unabashed commitment to his personal vision. Over the decades, his work has consistently surprised and engaged viewers with grotesque, humorous and often tradition-conscious paintings.

About Skarstedt

Skarstedt was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Skarstedt's New York gallery is located on 79 Street and Madison Avenue in an historic building, formerly the renowned Rosenberg Gallery. In October 2012, Skarstedt opened its London space on Old Bond Street with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. In 2014, Skarstedt will open a new space in the heart of Chelsea, New York with an exhibition of *Oxidation Paintings* by Andy Warhol and *Fire Paintings* by Yves Klein.

Skarstedt's programme reflects the gallery's established area of expertise whilst also expanding its focus to include museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach whilst working with prominent international museums and private collections around the world.

Notes to editors

Exhibition: *George Condo: Ink Drawings*

Location: Skarstedt, 23 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PZ, UK

Telephone: +44 (0) 207 499 5200

Dates: 11th February – 5th April 2014

Hours: Monday to Friday 10am - 6pm; Saturday 10 am - 5 pm

Admission is free

www.skarstedt.com

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