

BILL HODGES GALLERY

Paper

October 22nd – December 19th, 2020

Bill Hodges Gallery is pleased to present *Paper*, a selection of 28 drawings and mixed media works from the gallery's collection of works on paper. From evocative sketches to fully realized compositions, the exhibition shows the breadth of illusionistic and abstracted realities articulated on the paper's surface. This thoughtfully curated selection of paper works will be available to view at our Chelsea location from October 22nd – December 19th, 2020. Artists featured in the exhibition include Charles Gaines (1944), Norman Lewis (1909 – 1979), Romare Bearden (1911 – 1988), Wifredo Lam (1902 – 1982), Agustín Cárdenas (1927 – 2001), among others.

Paper offers to the public a fresh insight into some of art history's most prominent artists from the 20th and 21st centuries. While some artists use the pencil on paper to think through compositional problems, others produce works of art wholly realized on the paper itself. The paper's unassuming intimacy incites unparalleled access into a given artist's distinctive practice. The works selected for *Paper* stimulate new understandings of prominent modern artists, and facilitates a deeper understanding of the artistic possibilities for works on paper. Dynamic compositions are put in curatorial conversation with simpler, meditative works, like Charles Gaines' *Explosion #29*, (2009). Gaines' delicate rendering of such a consequential subject matter infuses the work with an impressionistic naturalism. The explosion is set in an empty background, suspending the work in time and space and laying the ground for introspection.



Charles Gaines, *Explosion #29*, 2009,
Graphite on Paper, 41 x 31 in.



Pablo Picasso, *Le cocu posant pour une photographie devant des spectateurs*, 1966, Etching with Aquatint on Wove Paper, Edition of 50, 14 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

The exhibition notably features two etchings by Pablo Picasso made in the later years of his artistic career, enriching our understanding of his artistic pursuits on paper. From his 347 series, *Raphael et la Fornarina VI: Enfin Seuls!* (1968) prominently features nude figures lounging and exposing their sexual organs. The impressionistic figures and setting are rendered with sparse lines, mirroring the languid nature of the subject. The work encourages an exploration of the erotic, as Picasso quite novelly positions himself as an observer and storyteller. The etching is placed alongside Picasso's work entitled *Le Cocu Posant pour une Photographie Devant des Spectateurs* (1966). The figures in both works are drawn with the same impressionistic details, but the figures in *Le Cocu* are placed in a dark, chaotic atmosphere. Picasso fills the

space around the figures with thin, dark lines, instilling abstraction and flatness into his illusionistic reality. These works explore how Pablo Picasso translates his ever evolving artistic style to paper, adding depth into his prolific, daring artistic career.

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Figuration is explored throughout the exhibition, often in conjunction or opposition with the abstract. Francisco Zuniga (1912 – 1998) uses sepia crayon to realistically render a delicately crouched nude woman in his work entitled *Desnudo Sentado*, (1978). Paired with Norman Lewis' abstract portrait *Untitled (Woman with a Yellow Flower)* (1943), the works explore the diverse artistic possibilities for the female form. A woman adorned in dress clothes and a yellow flower occupies the majority of the paper's surface. She almost appears to be conversing with the viewer, as she raises her hand and parts her lips, cigarette dangling from her mouth. The gouache and watercolor painted on the illusionistic portrait suffuse the work's mimesis with a cool toned haze of abstraction. The boundaries of the illusionistic and abstract are further challenged with Wifredo Lam's *San Titre* (1947), as the suggestion of a torso is undermined by the impressions of flora and fauna dizzily traversing the work.



Norman Lewis, *Untitled (Woman with a Yellow Flower)*, 1943, Gouache and Watercolor on Wove Paper, 20 x 14 in.



Agustín Cárdenas, *Untitled*, 1980, Gouache, India Ink, Collage, and Pencil on Paper, 25 3/4 x 19 in.

Agustín Cárdenas' work on paper *Untitled* (1956) next to his large and highly important marble sculpture, *Double Face* (1972), encouraging an examination of the artist's style across mediums. The curves and surrealist quality of this biomorphic structure are similarly articulated in *Untitled*, as slight modulation allow for the biomorphic forms to maintain a marble-like quality in a two dimensional reality. The colors in the background, vaguely delineated into quadrants, enforce an abstracted reality upon this three-dimensionally rendered sculpture. The works exhibited illustrate Cardenas' exploration of the boundaries between the abstract and figuration in surrealist practices.

Established in 1979, Bill Hodges Gallery is a modern and contemporary art gallery specializing in influential artists of the African Diaspora. The gallery's museum quality collection is well known for its strong inventory of Harlem Renaissance and Abstract works of art by prominent artists including Norman Lewis (1909 – 1979), Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000), Romare Bearden (1911 – 1988), Sam Gilliam (1933), and Ed Clark (1926 – 2019). Responding to market and scholarly interest in artists underrepresented in the canon of art history, the gallery showcases a wealth of minority artists and advocates for their status as leading artistic pioneers of the 20th and 21st centuries. *Paper* exhibits strong artworks by prolific Black artists alongside their well known contemporaries, positioning the works as important contributions to the history of arts.

Bill Hodges Gallery is located at 529 W. 20th Street, suite #10E, between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue. Our closest subway stations are 14th St. & 8th Ave. (A-C-E) and 23rd St. & 8th Ave. (C-E). The gallery is open Monday to Friday from 11 AM – 6 PM. Appointments are strongly encouraged but walk ins are accepted. The gallery is implementing social distancing measures; requiring guests wear appropriate personal protection equipment. Masks can be provided. For more information or to arrange a private viewing, please contact Bill or Navindren Hodges at (212) 333-2640 or at info@billhodgesgallery.com