

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

PRESS RELEASE

The Critic

September 13 – October 26, 2019

Opening: Thursday, September 12, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **The Critic**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. The exhibition explores the complicated relationship between artists and critics in a group of works by **Arthur Dove**, **Richard Hamilton**, **Jasper Johns**, **Les Levine**, and **Rosemarie Trockel** selected by Alex Kitnick

Included in the exhibition are several iconic works on loan from private and public collections, among them Arthur Dove's 1925 assemblage *The Critic* (Whitney Museum of American Art), Jasper Johns's 1961 sculpture *The Critic Sees* (private collection), and Richard Hamilton's 1972 sculpture *The Critic Laughs* (collection Jasper Johns).

In a statement accompanying the exhibition, Kitnick writes, "Not long ago I started gathering depictions of critics to see what artists might tell us about criticism. (I made a distinction between portraits of specific critics and images of critics in a more generic sense.) The first thing that came to mind were Jasper Johns's *The Critic Smiles* (1959) and *The Critic Sees* (1961). The first sculpture, a small mottled object made of Sculp-metal, fixes teeth onto a toothbrush; the second, and perhaps more memorable, places a mouth inside each lens of a pair of eyeglasses. These gnomic works are often thought to be somewhat mean, a reading abetted by some of the artist's own comments (comparing criticism to a 'police function,' for example). One might also see them as part of a history of artists' digs at critics, including Arthur Dove's 1925 collage *The Critic*, which places a flimsy newspaper man on roller skates, a vacuum in his left hand. But I think that these works — as well as Richard Hamilton's *The Critic Laughs* (print 1968, sculpture 1972, video 1980) — have more to offer than simple putdowns. While Johns's sculpture suggests that the critic is out of sorts, it might also point to a multisensory approach to getting one's head around art, bringing together vision and language in close connection. [...] Johns's work also signaled a crisis in criticism taking place in the 1960s."

In Les Levine's *Critic*, originally made as a video in 1966, thirteen leading critics from the time *are* the art, delivering their thoughts on criticism and its evolving role. Now transcribed for the first time and published on the occasion of the exhibition, *Les Levine: Critic, 1966* includes texts by the thirteen critics and an essay by Alex Kitnick.

The exhibition also marks the US debut of Rosemarie Trockel's 2015 sculpture *The Critic*, a figure wearing a black vest studded with hunting trophies. This "possible doppelgänger of the artist," Kitnick writes, "stares into the distance, which we might think of as the future, and that's the direction I'm most interested in."

The Critic is on view at 523 West 24th Street from September 13 to October 26, 2019, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For additional information, please contact Ted Turner at 212-243-0200 or ted@matthewmarks.com

The next exhibition at 523 West 24th Street, **One hundred drawings**, will open November 8.