

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian Basel to Present Work by Richard Artschwager, Opening September 1, 2022

Exhibition Forms Part of Citywide Program Kunsttage Basel



Richard Artschwager, *Exclamation Point (Yellow)*, 2001, plastic bristles on a poplar core painted with latex, 65 × 22 × 22 inches (165.1 × 55.9 × 55.9 cm), edition 3/3 © 2022 The Estate of Richard Artschwager/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Art is not an object; it is an event.

—Richard Artschwager

BASEL, August 15, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to present a selection of paintings, sculptures, and drawings by the late Richard Artschwager (1923–2013), the first exhibition of his work at Gagosian Basel. Since Artschwager’s participation in curator Harald Szeemann’s epoch-making exhibition *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* at Kunsthalle Bern in 1969, his work has been shown internationally, including throughout Switzerland at such major institutions as Kunsthalle Basel (1981), Kunst Museum Winterthur (2002 and 2006), and Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2005).

Artschwager specialized in crossing boundaries between genres and mediums, revealing the deception involved in pictorial illusion and communicating the essential strangeness of everyday objects and spaces. His work foregrounds the structures of human perception, often conflating the worlds of flat images and three-dimensional objects in witty and confounding ways. Artschwager made extensive use of synthetic materials, especially Formica and Celotex, a highly textured compound board.

The exhibition in Basel features several paintings on Celotex, including two titled *Weaving* (1969) that focus on the details of a fabric surface; *Untitled* (1992), an exterior view of a suburban house; and *The Kitchen* (1971), a depiction of the titular room. Also included is *T.W.M.D.R.B.* (1987), a view of six objects (the titular table, window, mirror, door, rug, and basket). All these works reflect Artschwager's longstanding interest in domesticity and infuse a deadpan, documentary approach with a surreal effect, as if their subjects were being observed at a physical and cultural distance. Artschwager derived these images, as he often did, from newspaper photographs, employing a grid system to enlarge them from their sources and enhance blurred details.

Artschwager's emphatic sculpture *Exclamation Point (Yellow)* (2001) occupies one corner of the gallery, while two chairs, both made in 1990 from red oak, Formica, cowhide, and painted steel, bracket the exhibition and provide visitors with relaxed vantage points from which to view the other work. *blp* (2013), a painted wood lozenge, is paired with *blp* (1967–2015), a similar shape spray-painted directly onto the gallery wall using a stencil. Artschwager conceived of these glyph- or logo-like works as abstract markers of human presence; they were also born out of, in his words, "an organized search for the cheapest, most accessible piece of art possible."

A selection of late-career pastel drawings depicts—and abstracts from—the landscape of New Mexico, where Artschwager spent his teenage years. The rough texture of the paper on which these strikingly colorful works are made recalls that of Celotex, though the works' palette is far wider than his earlier output. Scenes such as *Road with Causeway* (2011) and *Landscape with Blue Mountains* (2009) have an open, cinematic feel, while still-life images such as *Watermelon on Green Paper* (2011) convey a disarming simplicity and directness.

The exhibition is part of Kunsttage Basel, a citywide program of art events at more than fifty-five museums, galleries, and other spaces, that takes place from September 1 to 4, 2022. As part of the program, Douglas Gordon will also present work—including *Pretty Much Every Film and Video Work from About 1992 Until Now* (1999)—in a weekend-long installation at Fondation Beyeler.

Richard Artschwager was born in 1923 in Washington, DC, and died in 2013 in Albany, New York. Collections include Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Art Institute of Chicago. Exhibitions include *Painting Then and Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL (2003); *Up and Down/Back and Forth*, Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin (2003); *Hair*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (2010); *Richard Artschwager!*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2012, traveled to Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Haus der Kunst, Munich; and Nouveau Musée National de Monaco); and *Punctuating Space: The Prints and Multiples of Richard Artschwager*, Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY (2015). He also participated in Documenta in 1968, 1972, 1982, 1987, and 1992. A retrospective of Artschwager's work curated by the late Germano Celant opened at the Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Italy, in October 2019, and traveled to the Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain, in February 2020.

#RichardArtschwager

RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER

Opening reception: Thursday, September 1, 6–8pm

September 1–October 15, 2022

Rheinsprung 1, Basel

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