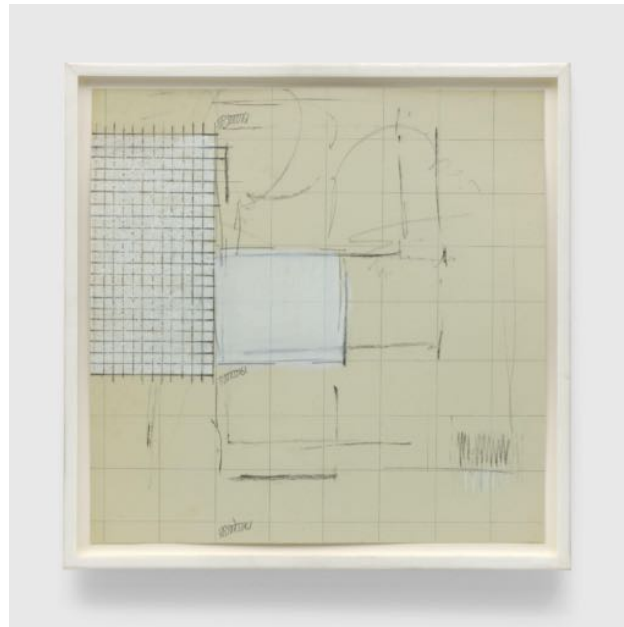


Robert Ryman: Line

30 November 2023–13 January 2024
24 Grafton Street, London



Robert Ryman, *Untitled Study*, 1961
Pastel, casein, Conté crayon, and graphite on grey-green paper
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David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of drawings by American artist Robert Ryman at the gallery's London location. Organised in collaboration with the artist's family, this exhibition will include works from the years 1961–2000, complementing the major presentation of Ryman's paintings from the early 1960s on view at the gallery's 537 West 20th Street location in New York, curated by Dieter Schwarz.

Featuring works made on a wide range of unorthodox supports, the exhibition underscores Ryman's expansive approach to drawing. Much like his analytical yet intuitive exploration of the medium of painting, Ryman's understanding of drawing reflects a singular investigation and deconstruction of the practice's formal and material qualities. As Schwarz writes: "Drawings by Robert Ryman are not necessarily works on paper. They can also be executed on canvas, anodized aluminium, polyester cloth, Plexiglas, or Mylar, and for those in fact done on paper, that can include not just drawing paper—mostly tinted yellow or grey—but also coffee filter paper, manila paper, or glassine. For Ryman, 'drawing' is not about being confined to a single genre or fixated on a conventional picture support. In his practice, a drawing is an object insofar as it does not represent anything. Yet it is not an object in the sense of a fixed given: it is the outcome of a process during which he verifies the properties of the medium and the support of the drawing, connecting the two and creating a linear configuration that involves both components."¹

¹ Dieter Schwarz, "Drawing the Drawing: Robert Ryman, Working the Line," in *Robert Ryman: Drawings*. Exh. cat. (New York: Pace, 2018), p. 7.

Ryman's drawings are inextricably linked to line, which manifests as both a physical mark and a conceptual form that exists chiefly in relation to the other elements of a given composition—as a border zone between two painted passages, for example, or a partition for a matrix of gridded squares. Many of the works on view incorporate the grid—a recurring motif that the artist once referred to as a “perfect” form—not as a preparatory scaffold but as a grounded, anchoring presence in its own right. In a group of works from the mid-1960s, the artist uses a Chemex coffee filter as a base for the grid, using the circular paper filter's rough surface to create textural lines of various lengths that investigate contrasts of shape and material. These works, like all of Ryman's drawings, are marked by a profound intentionality; the artist carefully considers medium and support in relation to one another, striving for a holistic understanding of the drawn line in a multitude of forms.

Ryman foregrounds the tensions that arise from places of delineation and intersection: at corners or edges, and between materials, surfaces, or textures. Working experimentally and iteratively, he subverts and expands the role of the line as one of the most foundational tenets of drawing. The artist often includes his own name in various guises and repetitions in his compositions, isolating and re-examining each familiar stroke through an almost scientific lens. In the five-drawing *Watermark* series (1968), notable for its use of paper featuring a watermark derived from Raphael's tondo painting, the *Madonna della Seggiola* (1513–1514), Ryman draws various graphite squares atop the existing image, allowing these linear interventions to act as both frame and extension to the iconography at hand.

This exhibition follows *Robert Ryman: The Last Paintings* in 2022, the gallery's first presentation of work by the artist since announcing representation of the Estate of Robert Ryman in spring 2021. In 2024, David Zwirner Books will also publish a major catalogue on Ryman, which will include new scholarship by Schwarz and Lucy Lippard, among others.

Robert Ryman (1930–2019) was born in Nashville, Tennessee. Ryman moved to New York in 1953 to pursue a career as a professional jazz musician. That same year, he took a job as a security guard at The Museum of Modern Art, where he would work for seven years. His time working at the museum in part inspired Ryman to devote his life toward painting.

Ryman had his first solo exhibition at Paul Bianchini Gallery, New York, in 1967, followed by several solo shows at influential galleries in Europe and the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich and Cologne (1968, 1969, 1971, 1972); Galerie Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf (1968, 1969, 1973); Ace Gallery, Los Angeles (1969); Fischbach Gallery, New York (1969, 1970, 1971); Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris (1969); Dwan Gallery, New York (1971); and Lisson Gallery, London (1972).

His first institutional solo exhibition was at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1972. Subsequent solo presentations at museums include those held at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1974); Kunsthalle Basel (1975); P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, New York (1977); Halle für Internationale neue Kunst, Zürich (1978, 1979, 1980); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (1986); Art Institute of Chicago (travelled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; 1987–1988); Tate Gallery, London (travelled to Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; 1993–1994); Haus der Kunst, Munich (travelled to Kunstmuseum Bonn; 2000–2001); Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art, Sakura, Japan (2004); Dallas Museum of Art (2005–2006); The Menil Collection, Houston

(2007–2008); and The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2010). In 2015 to 2016, Dia: Chelsea, New York, presented a retrospective of Ryman's work that spanned six decades of the artist's career, featuring works from the 1950s through the 2000s. The exhibition travelled to Museo Jumex, Mexico City, in 2017.

Ryman's work can be found in prominent institutional collections worldwide, including the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Art Institute of Chicago; Baltimore Museum of Art; Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, the Netherlands; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Dallas Museum of Art; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; Dia Art Foundation, New York; Fundación "la Caixa," Barcelona; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art, Sakura, Japan; Kunsthaus Zürich; Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; The Menil Collection, Houston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; Philadelphia Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Seattle Art Museum; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, United Kingdom; Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

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