

# Petzel

## MARIA LASSNIG

### *Drawings*

May 15 – June 22, 2024  
35 East 67th Street

Petzel is pleased to present *Drawings*, an exhibition of works on paper by Austrian artist Maria Lassnig (1919–2014). On view at the gallery's Upper East Side location at 35 East 67th Street, Parlor Floor from May 15 to June 22, 2024, the exhibition spans the artist's career in 32 works created from 1955 to 2009, revealing insight into the importance of drawing in Maria Lassnig's oeuvre.

Maria Lassnig notes in 1992, "The drawing is closest to the moment. Every moment has only one possibility." Interested in the immediacy of the medium, she dedicated a large part of her artistic practice to producing drawings. Known for her "body awareness painting," Lassnig's works on paper are intimately connected to her singular approach, translating interior bodily sensations to line and value on the page. Concerning the connection between both forms, Lassnig states, "Every drawing is a prevented oil painting, because I do not repeat a drawing in an oil painting, [my drawings] are autonomous."

Lassnig's drawings become experimental fields for spontaneously placed lines and color fields, as in *Blaue Figur auf Rot (Blue Figure on Red)*, 1956. These compositions take shape across a range of processes, using acrylic, watercolor, and gouache aspects to tint her pencil works on paper.

By bringing to the paper what she felt, not what she saw, Lassnig's explorations of the subjective pith within are radically observed, producing images that represent immediate sensory impressions. Parallel to her introspective analysis through self-portraiture, Lassnig also observed the outside world—works on view include abstract depictions of a garden fence from the early 1960s in *Wie am Gartenzaun (Like Beside the Garden Fence)* as well as a kinetic scene between predator and prey from 1996 in *Le buse (The Buzzard)*.

Now rightfully recognized as one of the most important artists of the 20th century, Maria Lassnig made her own body the focus of her art early on, long before body consciousness became a central theme of the international avant-garde. *Drawings* reveals Lassnig's unflinching, acutely internal process, bringing the viewer closer to their senses.

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## About Maria Lassnig

Maria Lassnig was born in 1919 in Carinthia, Austria and passed away in 2014 in Vienna. Underappreciated for most of her life, Lassnig is now rightfully recognized as one of the most important Post-War painters.

From a young age, Lassnig began to explore the human figure through drawing. She studied painting at the Vienna Fine Arts Academy but found the art scene at that time to be too limiting. She moved to Paris in 1960 and then to New York in 1968, continually exploring how to represent the body as it feels to inhabit rather than how it appears from the outside – a concept which Lassnig named Körperbewusstseinsmalerei (“body awareness painting”). On returning to her native Austria in 1980, she became the country’s first female professor of painting. She also taught animation during her time at the Vienna University of Applied Arts.

Her life’s work won her many accolades including the Grand Austrian State Prize in 1988 and the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in 2013 at the 55th Venice Biennale. She has been the subject of one person exhibitions at the Albertina Museum, Vienna; Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Kunsthaus Zurich; MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Serpentine Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; and Vienna Secession among others. Lassnig represented Austria in the 1980 Venice Biennale alongside Valie Export, and she participated in Documenta in Kassel, Germany in 1982 and 1997.

Petzel Gallery is located on the parlor floor and third floors of 35 East 67th Street New York, NY 10065. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Hanna Andrews at [hanna@petzel.com](mailto:hanna@petzel.com), or call (212) 680-9467.