

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

DRAWINGS

George Condo

SPRÜTH MAGERS LONDON OCTOBER 12 - NOVEMBER 12 2011

OPENING RECEPTION Tue, Oct 11, 2011 Noon to 6pm.

Sprüth Magers London is delighted to announce a timely exhibition of new works on paper by American artist George Condo, coinciding with his first major U.K. retrospective at the Hayward Gallery in October 2011.

George Condo emerged out of the dynamism of the New York art scene of the early 1980s, swiftly establishing himself as an unparalleled draftsman with an at once distinctive and arresting painterly style. Condo travelled to Europe where he associated with the Mülheimer Freiheit cohort of Cologne, a collective of so-called 'Young Wild Ones', with Walter Dahn and Jiri Georg Dokoupil being amongst the most influential painters on Condo. In 1984, Monika Sprüth Galerie in Cologne was the first European gallery to show Condo's work and over the past three decades Condo has continued to show in more than thirty exhibitions at Sprüth Magers. Condo's formative European travels eventually brought him to Paris where he remained until 1995. It was from his encounters with European painting that Condo embarked upon a series of 'fake Old Master' portraits that rampaged through the archives of art history, harnessing the pictorial languages of Velázquez, Rembrandt, Goya and Picasso.

In this most recent installment of Condo's work the focus turns to drawing, a medium that is omnipresent throughout his oeuvre. For Condo, drawing allows for a gestural freedom and immediacy that lends itself to abstraction. Working from thousands of sketchbooks, these new works on paper reveal the intensity of Condo's relationship to drawing which first became evident in his series of 'Expanding Canvases' (1984-1986) where he translates the spontaneity of drawing into painting; the surfaces teem with visual references that casually float free of definition as one form feeds into the next. In *Internal Constellation* (2001), a later large-scale work on paper, the surface is densely packed with small figures, suggestive of a horror vacui - there is no obvious break in the pencil lines that at once delineate nude female forms and decapitated miniature heads with bulging eyes and gnashing teeth. Condo's cartoon-like images, tangled together with what Laura Hoptman termed as 'Picassoid' figures, denote a field of cultural reference that draws not only from art history but from pop culture, from music and graffiti. These "psychological landscapes" as Condo describes them, reflect a profound love of drawing; regardless of the medium, whether it is oils, pastel or pencil, in Condo's work, every line is 'drawn'.

Over the past three decades Condo's work has been selected for major group shows at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1988, 1989, 1991, 1995 & 2010); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1992, 1994 & 2004); and included in 'US Paintings in the 1980's' at The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (1994); 'Six Feet Under. Autopsie Unseres Umgangs Mit Toten' at the Kunstmuseum, Bern (2006); 'Fractured Figure' at The Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens (2007); 'Blasted Allegories' at the Kunstmuseum Luzern (2008); 'How Soon Now' at the Rubell Family Collection Museum, Miami (2011). His solo shows include 'Le Visage Dans L'Art Contemporain' at Le Musée du Luxembourg, Paris and Le Musée des Jacobins, Toulouse (1990); The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1994 & 1995); Le Palais des Congrès, Paris (1995); 'New York Expression' at the Bergen Art Museum, Bergen (2002); 'One Hundred Women. Retrospektive' at the Kunsthalle, Bielefeld (2005) and 'La Civilisation Perdue' at Le Musée Maillol, Paris (2009). Condo recently collaborated with the hip hop artist Kanye West, to create the album cover art for *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, released in 2010.

Condo is currently the subject of a major retrospective entitled 'Mental States', which has travelled from The New

Museum in New York to the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (until 25 September). The retrospective will then travel to the Hayward Gallery in London (18 October 2011 – 15 January 2012) before its final journey to the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt (23 February 2012 – 28 May 2012).

Ends

For more information, interviews, or images, please contact Ana Castella:

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Visitor Information

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Opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm

Admission: Free

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