

## Paul Thek

### *Ponza and Roma*

January 10 – February 21, 2015

Tuesday–Saturday, 10am – 6pm



*Chicken Coop and Distant Island, 1975*

*Paul Thek: Ponza and Roma* is the first exhibition to examine the paintings and drawings Thek made in Italy during the 1970s. Following three sensational exhibitions of his wax meat pieces and the lost legendary installation *The Tomb* at New York's Stable and Pace Galleries in the 1960s, Thek spent a significant part of the 1970s in Europe. While there he created a series of large scale collaborative installations constructed from transitory materials such as sand, newspaper and trees. These installations were exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Moderna Museet, Stockholm; "Documenta V," Kassel; the Kunstmuseum Lucerne and Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum der Stadt Duisburg. Concurrently, Thek worked on the Mediterranean island of Ponza and in a flat in Trastevere, having first visited Ponza in 1968.

On Ponza, Thek captured the dramatic landscape of the island in traditional media of pencil, watercolor and oil paint. In Rome, he executed numerous paintings on spreads of the International Herald Tribune. A large number of these newspaper paintings were shown at Iolas Gallery in Paris in 1975. These works include images of Ponza, the sea, an eggplant, and a grape trellis as well as enigmatic personae such as a hot potato with arms and legs, and figures with globes or a valentine shaped heart for a head. Many of these images, and the Ponza motifs, are noted or sketched in Thek's notebooks, a selection of which is included in *Paul Thek: Ponza and Roma*. Ponza was a special place for Thek, a creative and spiritual haven. In his notebooks, he writes of the perfection of the work he made on Ponza and, referring to himself in the third person, "he couldn't live without the special sweetness and purity of Ponza". Three Roman notebooks in which Thek transcribed *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, punctuated by black and white Polaroids of clouds, are included in the exhibition as are selected correspondence and archival materials from the time.

Paul Thek was born in Brooklyn in 1933. He studied at the Art Students League and Pratt Institute in the early 1950s. In the mid-1960s, he produced a well-known body of work, *The Technological Reliquaries*: wax sculptures which looked like raw meat or human limbs encased in Plexiglas vitrines. Large-scale, full-body casts followed, sometimes set into specific environments. Thek's work is included in numerous American and European museum collections with particularly strong representation of his drawings at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 2010-2011, "Diver," a retrospective of his work curated by Elisabeth Sussman and Lynn Zelevansky was presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Beginning February 6, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam will have a presentation of the works and letters of Paul Thek which came into their collection in 1994 through the bequest of Franz Deckwitz, a longtime friend and collaborator. A Boijmans Study will accompany the presentation. *Paul Thek: Ponza and Roma* will travel to Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, March 20 – April 25, 2015.

For photographs or further information, please contact Olivia Gauthier at 212/367-7474 or [og@alexanderandbonin.com](mailto:og@alexanderandbonin.com). Additional information and images can be viewed on [alexanderandbonin.com](http://alexanderandbonin.com)

## Alexander and Bonin

Paul Thek: *Ponza and Roma*  
January 10 – February 21, 2015

### Reception

*Untitled (Eggplant)* 1974  
enamel on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 in/ 58 x 84 cm



### Main Gallery

*Untitled (oval sunset)* 1970  
watercolor and ink on paper  
11 ¾ x 15 ½ in/30 x 39.5 cm



*Untitled (Blue Seascape)* ca. 1970  
gouache on newspaper  
14 ½ x 22 ½ in/37 x 57 cm



*Untitled (Blue Seascape)* ca. 1970  
gouache on newspaper  
15 ½ x 22 ½ in/39.5 x 57 cm



Please see the following page for the group of works on paper

*Untitled (self-portrait, tomato, island)* 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 1/8 x 19 in/36 x 48.5 cm



*Untitled (Hammer and Sickle)* 1975  
crayon on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ½ in/58 x 85 cm



*Ponza drawings* 1973  
set of six pencil on paper drawings  
each: 9 x 12 in/23 x 30.5 cm



*Untitled (studio interior)*  
ca.1970  
pencil on paper  
14 x 19 in/36 x 48 cm

*Untitled (self-portrait,  
tomato, hippo)*  
ca. 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 x 19 in/36 x 48.5 cm

*Untitled (9/29/75)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

*Untitled (still life)* ca. 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 x 19 in/36 x 48 cm

*Untitled (4 Ponza  
Landscapes)* 1970  
ink on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

*Untitled (window in studio)*  
ca. 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 x 19 in/35.6 x 48.3 cm

*Untitled (6 studies)*  
ca. 1975  
pencil and watercolor  
11 ¼ x 15 ¾ in

*Untitled (self-portrait  
and shoe)* ca. 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 1/8 x 19 in/36 x 48.5 cm

*Untitled (oval  
landscape)* c. 1970  
watercolor and  
colored pencil  
7 x 9 1/2 in

*Untitled (5/9/70)* 1970  
pencil on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

*Untitled (studio interior)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
14 1/8 x 19 in/35.5 x 48 cm

*Untitled (Five  
Landscapes)* 1970  
graphite on paper  
11 ½ x 15 ¾ in

*Untitled (Ponza 10/7/75)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
14 x 19 in/35.5 x 48.5 cm

*Untitled (9/27/75)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

*Untitled (9-9-70)* 1970  
graphite on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

*Untitled (landscape  
with building 10/5/75)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
11 ¾ x 16 in

## Alexander and Bonin

*Chicken Coop and Distant Island* 1975  
acrylic on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Self Portrait as Hot Potato* 1975  
enamel and pencil on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Untitled (Heartman)* 1975  
acrylic on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Earth men* 1975  
acrylic on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Sea Series* 1975  
enamel on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Untitled (Grapes)* 1974  
enamel on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



*Red Sea (Chinoiserie)* 1975  
acrylic and gesso on newspaper  
22 ¾ x 33 ¼ in/58 x 84 cm



### Back Gallery

*Untitled (Ponte Sisto)* ca.1973  
oil on canvas  
19 ¾ x 23 ½ in/50 x 60 cm



## Alexander and Bonin

*Untitled (figures by rocks, water)* ca.1975  
oil on canvas  
19 ½ x 19 ½ in/ 49.5 x 49.5 cm



*Untitled (seascape)* ca. 1974  
oil on canvas  
19 3/8 x 19 3/8 in/49 x 49 cm



*Untitled (boat on sea with rock)* 1974  
oil on canvas  
19 ½ x 19 3/8 in/50 x 49 cm



*Untitled (Seascape)* ca. 1970  
pencil on paper  
14 1/8 x 19 in/36 x 48.5 cm



*Untitled (landscape 10/7/75)* 1975  
pencil on paper  
14 1/3 x 19 in/36 x 48 cm



*Untitled (landscape with Agave 10/2/75)*  
1975  
pencil on paper  
14 x 18 ¾ in/35.5 x 47.5 cm



*Untitled (10/3/75)* 1975  
pencil on paper  
14 x 18 ¾ in/35.5 x 47.5 cm



*Untitled (seascape with rocks)* ca. 1975  
oil on canvas with artist's frame  
and picture light  
8 x 10 in/20.3 x 25.4 cm



## Vitrine 1



1. notebook #52, 1975

2. notebook #4, c.1975

3. Letter to Peter Harvey, from Ponza, September 6, 1971

4. Photograph of Thek's bedroom, Casa Carmela, Ponza, 1969 (exhibition copy)

5. 2 polaroids, Ponza, c.1970

6. Letter to Marion Greenstone, from Ponza, September 28, 1971

7. notebook #27, c. 1972 - 76

8. Ponza Guidebook, date unknown

9. notebook #46, 1974

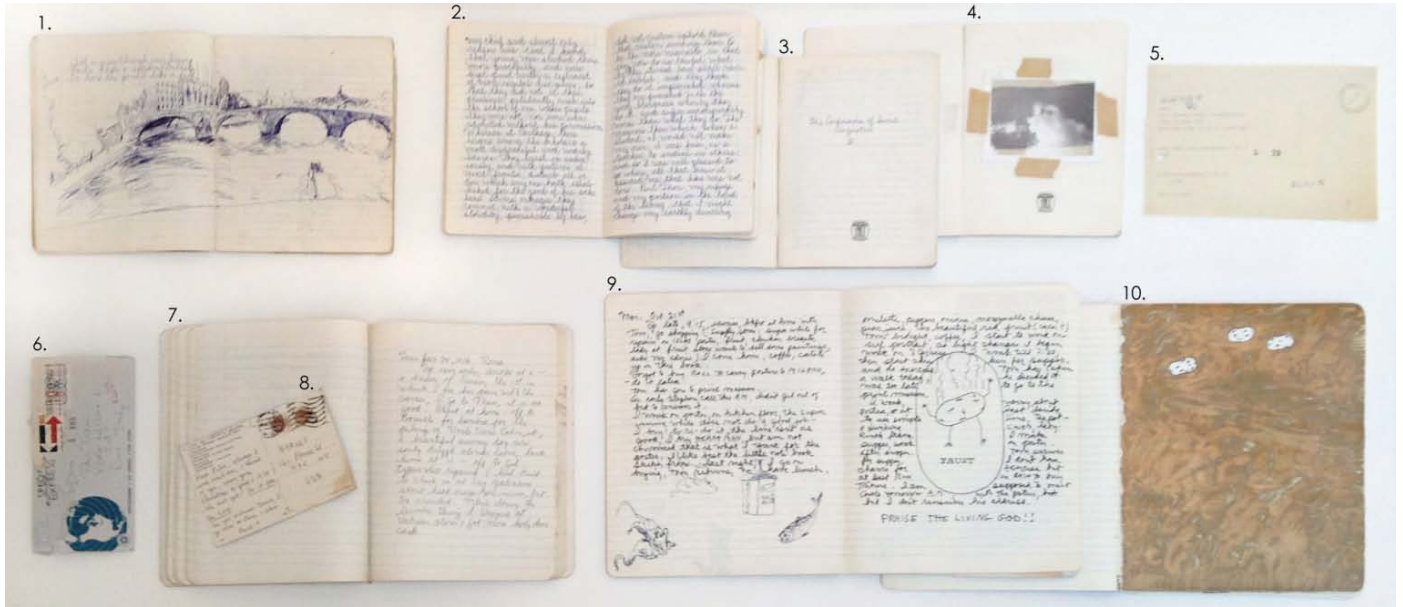
## Vitrine 2



1. Scotti home, Ponza, 1970s
2. Letter from Franz Deckwitz to Paul Thek, October 30, 1978, notebook #68, 1978
3. notebook #75, c.1975
4. 2 polaroids, Ponza, September, 1970
5. page from notebook #71, 1976
6. Letter to Peter Harvey, from Ponza, November 15, 1970
7. Postcard from notebook #66, 1977
8. Photograph of Thek's cabinet, Scotti home, Ponza, 1973 (exhibition copy)
9. notebook #13, 1974
10. 2 photographs, Ponza, 1970s
11. Self-interview: questions by Susan Sontag, answers by Paul Thek, c.1975

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## Vitrine 3



1. notebook #51, c.1973
2. notebook #45, c.1975
3. notebook #44, c.1975
4. notebook #43, c.1975
5. Telegram from Lily Nova to Paul Thek in Rome, December 17, 1974
6. Letter from Lily Nova to Paul Thek in Rome, December 8, 1974
7. notebook #22, c. 1975 - 76
8. Postcard to Peter Harvey from Rome, 1976
9. notebook #63, 1974
10. notebook #1, 1974 - 75