

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Ken Price Drawings

May 5 – June 25, 2016

Opening: Wednesday, May 4, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Ken Price Drawings**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. The show features thirty-four drawings, all from the estate of the artist, most on view for the first time.

“I’ve been drawing since I can remember,” Price has said. “I think sculptors learn to draw so that they can see what they’ve been visualizing.” His earliest works on paper explore forms and colors for his abstract sculptures, as seen in the Specimen drawings of the early 1960s. Price also drew impossible objects, like cups with a leaping frog or a cavorting nude for a handle. In his drawings of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the imaginary spaces inhabited by these objects became more fully realized, as in *Coffee Shop at the Chicago Art Institute* (1971).

Price’s drawings provide a counterpoint to his sculptures while imagining a world they might inhabit. *Two Sofas* (1991), for example, shows an imaginary domestic interior with a view of anonymous downtown high-rises. A semi-fictional Los Angeles appears in several drawings, complete with clogged freeways and palm-studded skylines.

Nature became the dominant force in the drawings from the early 2000s, which feature erupting volcanoes and turbulent seas inspired by Price’s trips to Hawaii. After his 2002 move to Taos, New Mexico, Price focused more on the high-desert scenery of rocky outcroppings, dramatic sunsets, and isolated trailer homes. He also began depicting his sculptural forms in nature, re-imagining them as monumental figures in the primordial landscape. The effect is both comic and mysterious, like his sculptures themselves — embodying, in the words of Lucy Lippard, “a beautiful and rather horrible strangeness that appeals to both the mind and the senses.”

The exhibition is accompanied by a large-format catalogue with an essay by Jean-Pierre Criqui and over seventy drawings in full color, many reproduced actual size.

Ken Price (1935–2012) was born in Los Angeles. After studying on the East Coast, he returned to California in 1959, quickly becoming part of the emerging art community around the Ferus Gallery. He has had one-person exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Menil Collection in Houston, and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. In 2012 the Los Angeles County Museum of Art presented a major retrospective of his work, which traveled to the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2013 the Drawing Center in New York, in collaboration with Buffalo’s Albright-Knox Art Gallery, organized the first survey of Price’s works on paper.

Ken Price Drawings is on view at 523 West 24th Street from May 5 to June 25, 2016, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jeffrey Peabody at 212-243-0200 or jeffrey@matthewmarks.com.