

Carroll Dunham: A Drawing Survey

April 21 - May 26, 2012

Opening reception: Saturday, April 21, 6-8 pm

Blum & Poe is very pleased to present a thirty-year survey of works on paper by New York-based artist Carroll Dunham. This exhibition marks Dunham's second solo presentation with the gallery.

Comprised of almost 400 works on paper, executed between 1982 and 2012, this exhibition serves as the most comprehensive evaluation of Dunham's drawing practice to date. Dunham's remarkable commitment to the medium is evident in both the sheer volume of drawings included in the exhibition (a fraction of his archive) and the frequency with which these works have been produced. A meticulous cataloger of his own work, Dunham dates each piece on its face with the day, month, and year of its making, offering viewers an intimate glimpse into his history as a practitioner and stylistic shifts from week to week, month to month, or decade to decade. In many cases, Dunham produces one or more drawings per day, for a week at a time or longer, adding up to an astonishing breadth of material and content. As witnessed in three separate drawings, each titled *Untitled* (3/28/96), two figures aggressively battle for command of the composition. When brought together, the three drawings begin to develop a narrative, which might change entirely two days later with a new series of drawings.

A formalist by nature, Dunham's drawings are studies in control, confidently moving between abstraction and figuration, bold mark making, and elegant scribbles and swirls. Refined over thirty years, Dunham's line has become a character in itself; nothing is accidental, whether executed in gentle pencil shading, reckless crayon scribble, or painterly ink and gouache. The drawings' protagonists have evolved over time from amorphous amoebas, oozing out of cluttered masses, to what are now more fully developed male and female nudes in exchange with lush landscapes. Several of the earliest works on view (1982-84) are executed on wood veneer, a trademark material used in Dunham's early paintings and drawings. For many of the next 20 years, Dunham's depiction of biomorphic forms equipped with grinding teeth, phallic noses, top hats, daggers, and guns dominated his visual language. These rough figures and mutated growths are pure expressions of unbridled sexuality, idleness, violence, and confusion, struggling to come to terms with the landscapes they have been placed in by their maker.

Carroll Dunham was born in New Haven, CT in 1949 and currently lives and works in New York and Connecticut. He has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions, including at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; a mid-career retrospective at the New Museum, New York; and an exhibition of paintings and sculptures at Millesgarden, Stockholm. His work has been included in several Whitney Biennials and is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Tate Gallery, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago amongst others.

For further information, please contact the gallery at info@blumandpoe.com or at 310-836-2062.