

**EXPO Chicago**

September 13 – 17, 2017

Alexander Gray Associates

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Represented Artists:

Polly Apfelbaum

Siah Armajani

Luis Camnitzer

Melvin Edwards

Coco Fusco

Harmony Hammond

Lorraine O'Grady

Betty Parsons

Joan Semmel

Hassan Sharif

Regina Silveira

Valeska Soares

Hugh Steers

Jack Tworkov



*Georgie*, 2015, ceramic and glaze, 14.50h x 12.63w in (36.83h x 32.07w cm)

## Polly Apfelbaum

Polly Apfelbaum's (b.1955) artistic practice is distinguished by a hybridized aesthetic that fuses traditions of painting, craft, and installation. Deploying a wide variety of media—including fabric, paint, dyes, wallpaper, plasticine, and ceramics—her work has dissolved spatial, plastic, and temporal boundaries. She is best known for expansive polychromatic installations, which coalesce the radical and the beautiful, simultaneously domestic and irreverent. Her sensibility is informed by an encyclopedic knowledge of the applied arts, fine art history, and popular culture.

Active since the mid-1980s, Apfelbaum's practice is notable for her use of found materials associated with craft traditions to create sculptural objects and sprawling, floor-based installations. She has referenced the aesthetics and principles of the Italian Arte Povera movement, French Supports/Surface movement, and First-Wave Feminist art, utilizing accumulation and dispersal as her preferred tools for installations.

Her material choices are often associated with craft and women's work, including dyed fabric, shredded paper, felt, and crepe paper streamers. Connecting the process and the materials is a determined injection of vibrant and improvisational color, reflecting her passion for Twentieth Century design and painting. With awareness of how her floor-based installations draw from classic traditions of fine art, Apfelbaum defines staining and dyeing as an act of painting; cutting, a way of drawing in space; and assembling the cut pieces a sculptural practice.

In recent years, she has expanded the site specificity of her work in order to create immersive environments that continue her interest in the cultural aspects of color and multi-sensory experience. In 2014 she created *For the Love of Gene Davis*, which encased a room in vibrant striped rugs and artist-designed wallpaper in homage to the Color Field painter's 1972 landmark outdoor painting, *Franklin's Footpath*. In such ambitious architectural interventions, Apfelbaum occupies and transforms entire spaces with correlated objects including painted walls, wallpaper, ceramic wall plaques, hand-woven rugs, and intimately scaled and suspended ceramic beads. She has also created sound installations incorporating ceramic instruments, often utilizing her 'shape notes,' as in *The Sound of Ceramics* (2016).

Apfelbaum's artwork titles are vital and evocative, pointing to a wide range of influences, including: music, film, literature, and mass media; philosophy and politics; art history and architecture. It is both through these references, and through her use of recognizable craft materials that she places cultural and social content into her formal abstractions. Her piece *Splendor in the Grass, Glory in the Flower* (1994), an assemblage of small white crushed velvet squares each imprinted with a colored dot and arranged in large rectangle on the floor, owes its title both to an excerpt of the William Wordsworth poem, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," completed in 1804, and *Splendor in the Grass* a 1961 film starring Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty.



Monopoly, 2012–2017, Monopoly game board, 20.25h x 20w in (51.44h x 50.80w cm)

## Luis Camnitzer

Luis Camnitzer (b.1937) is a German-born Uruguayan artist and writer who moved to New York in 1964. He was at the vanguard of 1960s Conceptualism, working primarily in printmaking, sculpture, and installations. Camnitzer's artwork explores subjects such as repression under systems of power, pedagogical norms, and the deconstruction of familiar frameworks. His humorous, biting, and often politically charged use of language as art medium has distinguished his practice for over four decades.

In 1964 he co-founded The New York Graphic Workshop, along with fellow artists, Argentine Liliana Porter and Venezuelan José Guillermo Castillo (1941–1999). For six years until the end of the workshop in 1970, they examined the conceptual meaning behind printmaking, and sought to test and expand the definition of the medium. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Camnitzer developed a body of work that explored language as primary medium, shifting from printing text on paper or walls, such as his *Dictionary* etchings and the room-size installation, *Living Room* (both 1969). As his interest in language unfolded, so did his aim to identify socio-political problems through his art. Camnitzer responded in great part to the growing wave of Latin American military regimes taking root in the late '60s, but his work also points to the dynamic political landscape of his adopted country, the United States.

During the 1970s, Camnitzer created a key body of work that blended both language and humor—producing a series of object-boxes that placed ordinary items within wood-framed glass boxes with text printed on brass plaques. In all cases, the printed sentences are also the works' titles. In many ways, these boxes anticipate one of Camnitzer's most important works, the *Uruguayan Torture Series* (1983–84). This photo-etching series epitomizes Camnitzer's ability to question the social and political roles of an individual in society, while also examining a dimension of human psychology by pairing images and text to create new meaning.

Though Camnitzer never left New York, his practice remains intrinsically connected to his homeland and the whole of Latin America. This consistent dedication cements his place as a key figure in shaping debates around ideas of post-Colonialism, Conceptualism, and pedagogy.



*No Rem*, 2012, welded steel, 12h x 8.50w x 7.50d in (30.48h x 21.59w x 19.05d cm)

## Melvin Edwards

Melvin Edwards (b.1937) is a pioneer in the history of contemporary African-American art and sculpture. Born in Houston, Texas, he began his artistic career at the University of Southern California, where he met and was mentored by Hungarian painter Francis de Erdelyi. In 1965 the Santa Barbara Museum of Art organized Edwards' first solo exhibition, which launched his professional career. He moved to New York City in 1967, where shortly after his arrival, his work was exhibited at the then newly created Studio Museum, and in 1970 became the first African-American sculptor to have works presented in a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum.

Edwards' work reflects his engagement with the history of race, labor, violence, as well as with themes of African Diaspora. Making welding his preferred medium, his compositions are studies in abstraction and minimalism. Edwards creates sculptures by welding metal objects such as tools, knives, hooks, and machine parts, to construct objects distinguished by formal simplicity and powerful materiality. He is best known for his sculptural series *Lynch Fragments*, which spans three periods: the early 1960s, when he responded to racial violence in the United States; the early 1970s, when his activism concerning the Vietnam War motivated him to return to the series; and from 1978 to the present, as he continues to explore a variety of themes. Edwards has felt deeply connected to Africa and the African Diaspora since the 1970s, when he and his late wife, poet Jayne Cortez, began visiting the continent. He taught metal-welding in several countries, establishing workshops and mentoring a younger generation of African welders.

Edwards has had a longstanding commitment to public art, working on projects for public housing and universities since the 1960s, including *Homage to My Father and the Spirit* (1969) at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; *Holder of the Light* (1985) at Lafayette Gardens, Jersey City, NJ; and *Asafokra* (1990) at the Utsukushi-Ga-Hara Open-Air Museum, Nagano Prefecture, Japan. His large-scale public sculptures exemplify his extraordinary range of aesthetic expression as well as his keen commitment to abstraction.



*Red Stack*, 2015, oil and mixed media on canvas, 80.25h x 50.50w x 2.50d in (203.84h x 128.27w x 6.35d cm)

## Harmony Hammond

Harmony Hammond (b.1944) was a leading figure in the development of the feminist art movement in New York in the early 1970s. She attended the University of Minnesota from 1963–67, before moving to New York in 1969. She was a co-founder of A.I.R., the first women's cooperative art gallery in New York (1972) and *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics* (1976). Since 1984, Hammond has lived and worked in northern New Mexico, teaching at the University of Arizona, Tucson from 1989–2006. Hammond's earliest feminist work combined gender politics with post-minimal concerns of materials and process, frequently occupying a space between painting and sculpture.

For years, she worked with found and repurposed materials and objects such as rags, straw, latex rubber, hair, linoleum, roofing tin, and burnt wood as well as buckets, gutters and water troughs as a means to introduce content into the world of abstraction. Hammond's near-monochrome paintings of the last decade participate in the narrative of modernist abstraction at the same time as they insist on an oppositional discourse of feminist and queer content. Their focus on materiality and the indexical, suggesting topographies of body and place, derives from and remains in conversation with, her feminist work of the 1970s. A second ongoing series of overtly political work in various media ranging from bronze sculpture to digital prints, deals with issues of intolerance, censorship and self-censorship.

In *Red Stack* (2015), Hammond grommets a field or grid of holes into the canvas. She utilizes the grommets, straps applied to the canvas, and layers of oil paint, building a textured, earthy red, near-monochromatic surface activated by light and cast shadow. The grommets are not aligned in a perfect grid, as the drying paint often warps the surface of the work. Hammond states, "I consciously allow—no encourage—process to alter the materials, and therefore, the grid." The grommets holes physically open the painting surface alluding to layers, spaces and histories buried below as well as body orifices. The centers of the grommets appear dark as if they puncture the work, allowing the viewer to peer through the canvas. Hammond explains, "under layers of paint assert themselves up through the holes suggesting agency and voice. A rupture from underneath, from what has been built upon...added to...covered up or over..."



Art Is . . . (Nubians), 1983/2009, c-print, 16h x 20w in (40.64h x 50.8w cm), edition of 8 + 1 AP (Ed. 1/8)



Art Is... (Women in Crowd Framed), 1983/2009, c-print, 16h x 20w in (40.64h x 50.8w cm), edition of 8 + 1 AP (Ed. 3/8)

## Lorraine O'Grady

Lorraine O'Grady (b.1934) combines strategies related to humanist studies on gender, the politics of diaspora and identity, and reflections on aesthetics by using a variety of mediums that include performance, photo installation, moving media, and photomontage. A native of Boston, MA, her work involves her heritage as a New Englander, and daughter of Caribbean immigrant parents. After she graduated from Wellesley College in 1956 studying economics and Spanish literature, she served as an intelligence analyst for the United States government, a literary and commercial translator, and rock music critic. Turning to visual arts in the late 1970s, O'Grady became an active voice within the alternative New York art world of the time. In addition to addressing feminist concerns, her work tackled cultural perspectives that had been underrepresented during the feminist movements of the early 1970s.

In the 1980s, O'Grady created two of her most currently recognized bodies of work, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire* (1980–83), a guerilla performance taking place in the heart of New York City's downtown art scene, and *Art Is . . .* (1983), a joyful performance in Harlem's African-American Day Parade. In *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire*, O'Grady's extravagant persona responded to the Futurist dictum that art has the power to change the world and was in part a critique of the racial apartheid still prevailing in the mainstream art world. Wearing a costume made of 180 pairs of white gloves from thrift shops and carrying a white cat-o-nine-tails of sail rope from a seaport store that she had studded with white chrysanthemums, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire* (Miss Black Middle-Class) was an equal-opportunity critic. She gave both timid black artists and thoughtless white institutions a "piece of her mind." Under this persona, O'Grady visited both the burgeoning Just Above Midtown black avant-garde gallery and the then recently opened New Museum of Contemporary Art.

*Art Is . . .* embodied O'Grady's desire to fully connect with the audience. The performance was undertaken in a spirit of elation which carried over through the day; unlike previous works which had critiqued the art world from within, this piece went outside to be about life and art. O'Grady used a 9 x 15 foot antique-styled gold frame mounted on a gold-skirted parade float that moved slowly up Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, framing everything it passed as art. Today, the work is a compelling reminder of the politics and power of art making, as well as the joy of experiencing art.

Concerned with the lack of African-American and other representation in the Feminist movement of the 1970s, O'Grady critiqued the effort's inability to "make itself meaningful to working-class white women and to non-white women of all classes." O'Grady has continued an ongoing commitment to articulating "hybrid" subjective positions that span a range of races, classes and social identities. In addition to her work as a visual artist, she has also made innovative contributions to cultural criticism with her writings, including the now canonical article, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity".





*Brick in the Sky*, 1968, acrylic on linen, 39.50h x 30w in (100.33h x 76.20w cm)

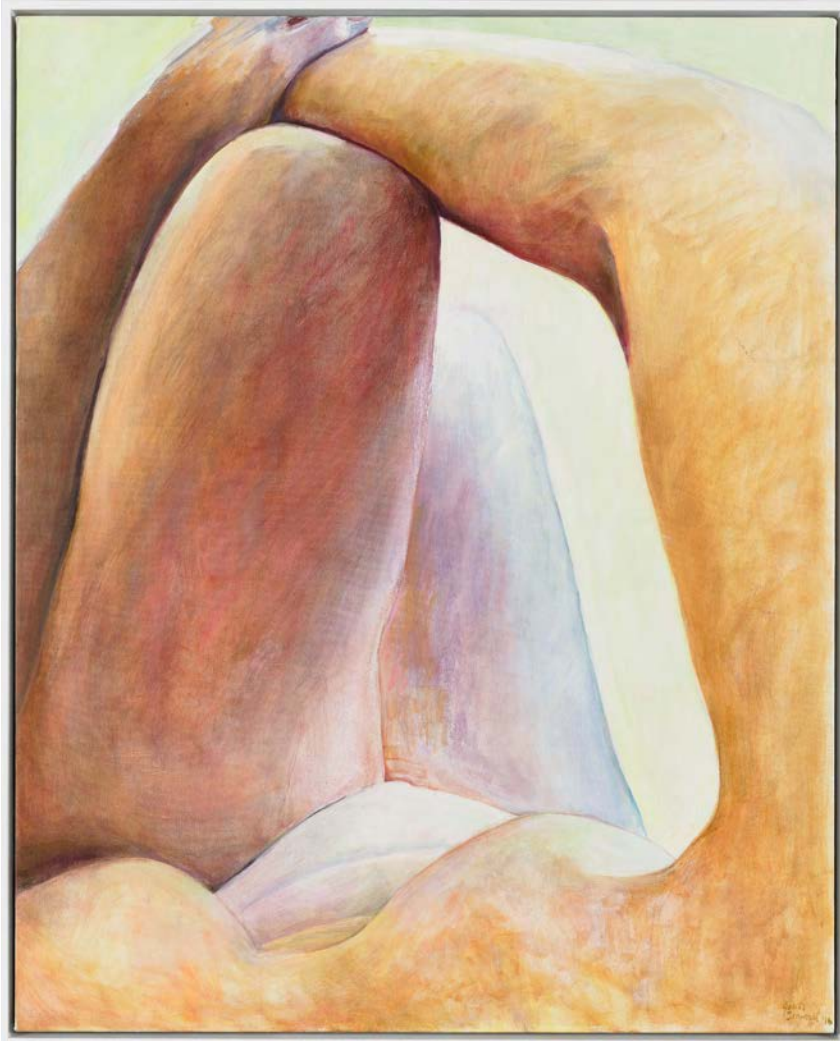
## Betty Parsons

Betty Parsons (b.1900, New York City, NY – d.1982, Southold, NY) was an abstract painter and sculptor who is best known as a dealer of mid-century art. Throughout her storied career as a gallerist, she maintained a rigorous artistic practice, painting during weekends in her Long Island studio. Parsons' eye for innovative talent stemmed from her own training as an artist and guided her commitment to new and emerging artists of her time, impacting the canon of Twentieth-Century art in the United States.

Parsons was drawn to art at an early age when in 1913 she attended the Armory Show in New York City. As she came of age, she became dissatisfied with the traditional models of education and limited occupations for women at the time. Following the dissolution of her marriage to Schuyler Livingston Parsons in 1923, she moved to Paris and studied painting and sculpture with School of Paris figures, including Ossip Zadkine and Alexander Archipenko. Her ten years in Paris centered around the ex-patriate community of lesbian artists and cultural figures, including Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Beach, and Adge Baker, in pursuit of a life in art. Upon her return to the U.S. in 1933, Parsons continued to create, spending time in California and New York. In 1935, she had her first solo exhibition of paintings at Midtown Galleries, New York, and following this show, she was offered a job installing works and selling paintings on commission, sparking her curatorial interest and developing her professional identity as an art dealer. In 1946, Parsons opened her eponymous gallery in New York, and after the closure of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in 1947, she inherited Guggenheim's roster of artists, including Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Clyfford Still. While her gallery's legacy is closely tied to these leading figures, Parsons also championed a diverse program of artists, showcasing work by women, gays and artists of color, reflecting her liberal and inclusive values, and eclectic tastes.

While operating her gallery, Parsons continued to make art. Following her formal training as a sculptor and landscape watercolorist, Parsons made a stylistic departure in 1947 when she began to work abstractly to capture what she called "sheer energy" and "the new spirit." From the late 1940s onward, her paintings conveyed her passion for spontaneity and creative play through impulsive gestural brushstrokes and organic forms. She utilized thin layers of vibrant paint, often allowing the surface of the canvas to remain visible. Parsons had a long interest in ancient and ethnographic arts, as well as mystical and non-Western spiritual practices, including meditation. Through these interests, she chose to set aside the rigid theoretical framework of contemporary abstraction, allowing instead for expressive improvisation in her paintings.

Throughout her life, Parsons traveled widely in pursuit of new influences, taking frequent trips to Mexico, France, Italy, Africa, and Japan. She meticulously recorded her travels in her journals as watercolors and sketches, and often drew on a sense of place in her work. In the 1960s, Parsons would increase her time in Long Island, having built a painting studio designed by the sculptor Tony Smith, perched above the Long Island Sound. Her weekends would be consumed by observing nature, and her painting became increasingly saturated with color. In addition to painting, in the late 1970s she returned to sculpture, making polychrome assemblages of discarded wood and driftwood she would collect on the beach. Parsons died in 1982, a year after closing her 57th Street gallery, leaving a multi-faceted legacy as a woman, and an artist, of the Twentieth Century.



*Cool Light*, 2016, oil on canvas, 60h x 48w in (152.40h x 121.92w cm)

## Joan Semmel

Joan Semmel (b.1932) has centered her painting practice around issues of the body, from desire to aging, as well as those of identity and cultural imprinting. She studied at the Cooper Union, Pratt Institute and the Art Student's League of New York. In the 1960s, Semmel began her painting career in Spain and South America, where she experimented with abstraction. She returned to New York in the early 1970s, where her practice turned towards figurative paintings, many with erotic themes in response to pornography, popular culture, and concerns around representation. Her practice traces the transformation that women's sexuality has seen in the last century, and emphasizes the possibility for female autonomy through the body.

In the 1970s, Semmel began her exploration of female sexuality with the "Sex Paintings" and "Erotic Series," large scale depictions of highly sexual positions. Her reclaimed gaze of the female nude heralded a feminist approach to painting and representation in the 1970s. Produced at a pivotal moment in her practice and in the cultural landscape of Second-wave Feminism, these series depict couples entwined in various coital positions rendered with expressive gesture, exemplifying her keen understanding of color and composition. In 1974, she made a definitive formal shift from abstraction by fully embracing figuration. Using her own body as subject, she began depicting her nakedness on canvas, shifting the perspective from that of an observer to a personal point of view. During the mid-1970s, Semmel turned to photography to capture reflections of her own body, later bringing the camera and her reflection in mirrors into the paintings in the 1980s.

Since the late-1980s, Semmel has meditated on the aging female physique. Recent paintings continue the artist's exploration of self-portraiture and female identity, representing the artist's body, doubled, fragmented, and in-motion. Dissolving the space between artist and model, viewer and subject, the paintings are notable for their celebration of color and flesh. Soft and milky colors provide background for the luminous skin tones Semmel captures, as figure and ground merge. In many of the works, the artist confronts the viewer with a direct gaze, a departure from iconic earlier works in which the point of view that remained within the canvas itself.



*Seven Points Angular Lines - Part 1*, 2013, mixed media, 23.40h x 16.50w in (59.44h x 41.91w cm)

## Hassan Sharif

Hassan Sharif (b.1951, Bandar Lengeh, Iran – d.2016, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) lived and worked in Dubai. Recognized as a pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East, Sharif's artworks surpass the limits of discipline or singular approach, encompassing performance, installation, drawing, painting, and assemblage. Since the late 1970s, he maintained a practice as a cultural producer and facilitator, moving between roles as artist, educator, critic, activist, and mentor to contemporary artists in the U.A.E.

After familiarizing himself with the ideas of Dada and Fluxus art during his studies in the early 1980s at Byam Shaw School of Art in London (now Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design), Sharif created performance-based works that engaged with repetition, landscape, and the body, themes that he has continued to explore throughout his practice. Sharif first incorporated weaving into his art making process as a part of his "Objects" series (1982–present) as a means of critically exploring the increasing modernization and industrialization occurring in the U.A.E.

An acute awareness of his environment led Sharif to embrace constant experimentation and a variety of materials. In his body of work, he focused on experiments and semi-systems, he utilized the grid to draft constructivist structures. Sharif aimed to create art that was linked to society and speaks to universal aspects of daily life. He manifested this interest through his use of ordinary materials. He incorporated cotton, textile, metal, chord, plastic, and everyday objects to create a variety of works that reflect contemporary concerns such as consumerism, manufacturing, and commercialization of handicrafts.



*Sugar Blues (IX)*, 2013, mixed media, 33.25h x 33.25w x 7d in (84.45h x 84.45w x 17.78d cm)

## Valeska Soares

Valeska Soares (b.1957) was born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and from a young age, she was exposed to references from a variety of cultural milieus, including poetry, literature, film, psychology, and mythology. She studied architecture at Universidade Santa Úrsula, Rio de Janeiro; this training reinforced an interest in site specificity, with artworks that consider both contextual history and spatial constructs. The Brazilian art scene in the late-1980s and early 1990s catalyzed Soares' artistic career in Rio and São Paulo, and in 1992, she moved to Brooklyn, NY, continuing her artistic education and career. From New York, throughout the 1990s and 2000s, her work has been positioned in multiple platforms, reinforcing the globalized art world's questions of geography, cultural and national identity, discipline, and form.

Soares' bodies of work are linked thematically, but deploy diverse strategies to address issues and concerns through materials, forms, and experiences. Utilizing tools of minimalism and conceptualism, her work embraces emotion and humanity, mining territories of love, intimacy and desire; loss and longing; memory and language. She has explored these elusive themes through a myriad of tactics, infusing objects such as mirrors, clocks, glass, books, furniture, and flora with poetics, narrative, and alchemy. The resulting artworks—painting, sculpture, installations, video, and audio experiences—morph the physical and the psychological, the body, and the mind. In Soares' refined visual language, reflective objects suggest reflective thinking, concealed images reveal unexpected mysteries, accumulated words disintegrate linear narrative.

Desire is a central theme in Soares' practice, enticing viewer engagement by alluring all five senses. Her installations have included perfume, decaying flowers, or spirits; these works result in phenomenological experiences that shift perception and expectations. In her words "desire is like a vanishing point: every time you go towards it, it recedes a little." Another motif in her work is the transference of personal memory and collective history; the artist frequently re-purposes second hand objects that she considers charged by "the lives and memories [of former owners], becoming for a moment in time, part of those personal narratives as each one travels from subject to subject." Canvases made of book covers convene and re-orient individual narratives; collections of empty antique cake platters or half-filled drinking glasses, suggest rituals or celebrations that have been suspended in time. Soares' art encourages the widest possible viewer experience, rejecting the idea of a singular reading or message. She describes this interest in unrestricted opportunities for engagement; as "what interests me is the surprise in how each person is going to perceive the piece. And even the same person, on different days—depending on the sun and the moon, a dream they had, how they woke up—the work is never the same."



Untitled, 1943, colored pencil on paper, dimensions variable



Untitled, 1943, colored pencil on paper, 9.88h x 6.65w in (25.10h x 16.90w cm)

## Sergei Eisenstein

Sergei Eisenstein's sexually explicit drawings, completed between 1931–1948, span the period of his travels in Mexico and the United States in the 1930s until his death in Moscow in 1948.

A renowned film director and film montage innovator, Eisenstein also wrote extensively and made upwards of 5,000 drawings throughout his life, including designs for film sets and storyboards. This group, however, revealed Eisenstein's sexual imagination, in part informed by his own bisexuality as well as his considerable reading and travel. Arranged in groupings that demonstrate a diversity of content, the drawings on view are intimately scaled, mostly monochromatic, with flashes of colored pencil typically in red or blue.

As historian Joan Neuberger notes, during his time in Mexico, "Eisenstein confirmed that drawing was no less important in his work as an artist than film-making and theory writing," though it remains lesser-known. Many of his films are subtly subversive in his refusal to broadly prioritize propagandistic Soviet Realism over experimentation with camera techniques. In his "sex drawings," Eisenstein engages in pointed institutional critiques, occasionally through the inclusion of Christian iconography and clergy members entwined in sexual acts that might be read as sacrilegious. He also illustrates figures engaged in intercourse in public spaces including the circus, nightclubs, and the streets. Through his exploration of this content, Eisenstein constructs succinct and transgressive visual stories in a medium that was intentionally less public-facing than his films.

Eisenstein's experiences in Hollywood are apparent in these drawings, in particular his interest in Walt Disney's films, which he claimed were "the greatest contribution of the American people to art," and which informed his sometimes cartoonish style demonstrated in a drawing of a nude man draped backwards over an expressively wide-eyed giraffe.

After spending six months in California, Eisenstein traveled to Mexico to begin filming *¡Que Viva México!*, an epic about the country's history. He intended his trip to last three to four months; it lasted over a year. In 1946, Eisenstein wrote, "it was in Mexico that my drawing underwent an internal catharsis, striving for mathematical abstraction and purity of line. The effect was considerably enhanced when this abstract, 'intellectualized' line was used for drawing especially sensual relationships between human figures." This interest in line and interplay of figures underscores his connection to the work of Mexican muralists including Diego Rivera, who Eisenstein first met in 1927, and whose work he greatly admired.

The drawings on view had a rich history. When departing Mexico, Eisenstein was stopped, questioned and his luggage searched at the United States border where the drawings were nearly confiscated for their incendiary nature. Upon his return to Moscow at the height of Stalin's rule he kept the explicit images hidden until his death in 1948. His widow, the writer and filmmaker Pera Atasheva, donated most of his graphic archive, with the exception of his sex drawings, to the Russian State Archives of Literature and Art in Moscow (RGALI). Atasheva entrusted the erotic drawings to Eisenstein's close friend and collaborator, the famous Soviet cinematographer Andrei Moskvin, who protected the director's reputation by keeping these drawings hidden. After Moskvin's death in 1961, his widow safeguarded the drawings. In the late 1990s her heirs sold the drawings to the family of present owner. A quarter of the drawings were also donated to the permanent collection of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia.

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