



GEMINI G.E.L. <sup>AT</sup> JONI MOISANT WEYL

**For Immediate Release**

**UNDER ONE ROOF**

February 6 – May 2, 2020

Reception: February 6, 2020



Roy Lichtenstein, *Modern Room* 1991. 12-color lithograph, woodcut, screenprint. Edition of 60.

Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl is pleased to present *Under One Roof*, an exhibition about commodification, domesticity, private and public selves, and the blurred boundary between furniture design and art. The artists in this show question the meaning of our relationship to interior environments as well as household objects, and investigating these relationships reveal the ‘house’ as both a lived experience and a vehicle for abstract thought. Artists included are John Baldessari, Jonathan Borofsky, Frank Gehry, Robert Gober, Philip Guston, Ann Hamilton, Jasper Johns, Edward and Nancy Kienholz, Roy Lichtenstein, Elizabeth Murray, Bruce Nauman, Ken Price, Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Ruscha, Analia Saban, and Richard Tuttle.

Roy Lichtenstein is well-known for his cool depictions of interiors. The artist collected images of the ‘ideal’ home, sourced from Yellow Pages’ phone books and advertisements, which were then re-worked into imagined, solitary settings for daily life, usually devoid of the human figure. Flattened and graphically rendered, Lichtenstein reduced the interior scene to an almost abstract and unnatural orderliness, or “worlds minus all the noise and clutter of real life.”<sup>1</sup> These scenes even include representations of his own paintings, playfully rendering his own work as commodified decorations of the ultra-hip collector. Viewed in the



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context of consumer excess, Lichtenstein exposes the irony that society accepts these interiors as the ideal – that one can own a home without truly living in it.

Like Lichtenstein, many of Ken Price's representations of interiors are stylized and boldly graphic in their rendering, and one of his ceramic sculptures often appears, with sly, biomorphic intent. In *Mediterranean Lizard Cup*, instead of blending in, his small cup, placed on the oversized table, becomes the focal point as opposed to merely being the decor.

The works by Ann Hamilton directly bring the human element into this presentation of domesticity. At first glance, Hamilton's *reach* look like ancient rusted artifacts. Upon closer examination, the sculptures are spoons, but with elongated handles proportioned to fit the exact length of the human arm, and have holes in their centers, which thwart its standard functionality and give them a contradictory presence.

Analia Saban's series, *Spilled Interiors*, is also inspired by domestic objects, being formed by the use of stencils in the shape of pitchers. These stencils, instead of holding water, hold etching ink that is allowed to partially dry, and once placed through the printing press, the ink smears beyond their shapes onto the paper in unpredictable ways. Also included in the exhibition are her trompe l'oeil series *Wood Floor on Wood*, photo-etchings of wood grain, printed on wood. By bringing the floor up to the wall, the art material or domestic object is taken apart and reconstituted into something else, thereby twisting their function and challenging the "material integrity of objects."<sup>2</sup>

A number of artists in this show engage with, and create, functional furniture. For Robert Rauschenberg, the chair was his way of making the viewer part of the art, and his *Borealis Shares* was created as exquisitely-rendered seating for two. Richard Tuttle's *Yellow Circle* strives to bring the floor to the forefront, to raise the floor into our consciousness, and approaches the making of the ceramic tiles as he would printmaking, with pattern, composition and sequence playing an important role. Jonathan Borofsky takes his *Berlin Dream*, a drawing created while living in Berlin in the early 1980s, and creates a cylinder of light. Borofsky's dream was a way for him to think about concepts of freedom, aggression, and division, and this lamp, illuminating the Berlin image printed on Mylar and sheathed in an acrylic tube, goes beyond the functional.

For Ed and Nancy Kienholz, the found furniture in their assemblage sculptures is not necessarily functional. *The Marriage Icon* consists of an oak headboard embedded with Victorian-era postcards showing the different phases of courtship and married life. However, Kienholz adds a sexually-explicit photo, and covers the entire artwork in dripping resin, thereby adding a countercultural, dark twist to the institution of marriage. Similarly, the assemblage *Ernte 23* looks like it could blend into any home from the time period, but the "television" is actually a gasoline can with a Fresnel lens, accompanied by a tape recording of television sounds. The Kienholzes were critical of American television media, believing that corporations are squashing independent news sources. *Ernte 23* is created using the refuse of a culture to expose the dark side of modern life, and the constrictions of societal mores.



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Bruce Nauman's *House Divided* shows the exterior of a typical simple house, but the interior is bisected diagonally with one half completely sealed off and inaccessible – a visual rendering of Abraham Lincoln's famous 1858 speech: "a house divided against itself cannot stand." This 'house' does not provide any shelter or privacy, but focuses instead on the separation between private spaces where the individual can be free and public spaces, where societal rules affect individual behavior. The etching shows both inside and outside in one glance, reflecting the human impulse to hide but also to see what is hidden.

Likewise, Robert Gober's *Untitled (2002)* tour-de-force lithograph is both an interior and an exterior. The imagery is a virtual encyclopedia of Gober's visual vocabulary, including his well-known use of trees and autumn leaves, a prison window, a discarded mayonnaise packet, and the open cellar doors first seen in his 2001 Venice Biennale installation. Also visible at the top of the print are the tips of a pair of shoes, suggesting an observer (perhaps the artist?).

Several of the artists in the exhibition provide us with images that ask us to expand our thoughts and relationship to seemingly straightforward architectural forms. Frank Gehry's etchings render buildings and houses with spontaneous and fluid lines, unaffected by mass or weight; they capture the spirit of the imagined buildings and the psychological effect of their space by using organic and undefined forms instead of straight lines. Jasper Johns' *Untitled* includes a blueprint of his childhood home, overlaid with outlined forms from other paintings. Elizabeth Murray's *Do I Love You* is a lithographic collage of an unruly expressive house; the door is open, smoke from an unseen fireplace emanates from the chimney, and an empty chair invites us inside. With his typical dry humor, Ed Ruscha, too, invites us inside; the house that forms the basis of his *Unstructured Merriment* was the residence of Gemini G.E.L. co-founder Stanley Grinstein, and was the site of many gatherings and parties which were formative during the early years of the Los Angeles art scene.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Fitzpatrick & Dorothy Lichtenstein, *Roy Lichtenstein: Interiors* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Johanna Burton, *Analia Saban: The Whole Ball of Wax* (Houston, University of Houston, Blaffer Art Museum, 2016), 20.