



GEMINI G.E.L. ^{AT} JONI MOISANT WEYL

DIALOGUES ACROSS TIME

FROM DURER TO THE ARTISTS OF GEMINI G.E.L.

Curated by Susan Dackerman

Artists both document and produce history. They simultaneously exist in its stream while forging their own artistic pathways. Printed images have always been a source of historical knowledge for artists, and printmaking, in turn, is a means of making their own histories visible to us now.

This exhibition presents a selection of prints old and new that allow us to see their historical connections and entanglements by exploring themes that have been fundamental to artistic expression for centuries. While Dorothea Rockburne makes the association explicit by titling a lithograph, *Melencolia*, after one of Dürer's most celebrated engravings, other artists are less conscious of them, and perhaps indifferent to the history that underlies their work. Nonetheless, that history oftentimes emerges – intuitively, conceptually, and visually.

Beginning with an examination of the very foundations of artistic practice, "Artists Making Art" includes Albrecht Dürer's instructional manual for artists, which teaches the use of geometry and measurement for constructing images and other forms. Rembrandt van Rijn, who etched portraits of two artistic contemporaries, a goldsmith and calligrapher, probably knew Dürer's manual, and his sitters may have too. More recently, Roy Lichtenstein and Analia Saban have made prints that literally document the technical processes used to make them.

Artists have always recorded the world around them, often focusing on flora and fauna, as well as the clouds and stars in our sky. "Nature Studies" includes Dürer's depictions of the natural world, a subject for which he is renowned. Ann Hamilton, Susan Rothenberg, Toba Khedoori, and Ellsworth Kelly also turned their gazes to nature, using printmaking to make it visible in unique ways. Galileo's invention of the telescope and his drawings of his observations initiated centuries of artists depicting the theme of "The Sky Observed." Here you will see the Italian astronomer Francesco Fontana's engravings of the moon, which rival those of Galileo, his better-known contemporary. While Richard Serra, Ron Davis, and Vija Celmins portray what Galileo and Fontana saw through their telescopes, Dorothea Rockburne imagines dark matter in her *W.I.M.P* (weakly interacting massive particles) lithographs. Tacita Dean deftly uses lithography to depict the sublime cerulean skies of Los Angeles.

In "Geometry and Proportion" we see Dürer's study of the proportions of a man alongside Jonathan Borofsky's *Male/Female* figures, which are reminiscent of Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man*. John Baldessari's series of screenprints, *Madame Cezanne's Hairdos*, embody centuries of historical awareness as well as tell a story of their own. By portraying different views of Cezanne's wife's brow derived from likenesses made by the artist, and titling them with the names of shapes, Baldessari not only recalls the late 19th-century artistic tradition of portraiture, but also refers to the Platonic solids: simple isometric forms named for the ancient philosopher and understood as the building blocks for all other forms. "Ornament" includes the complicated entanglements of Dürer's *Knots* and Martin Schongauer's vines which are mirrored in the work of Terry Winters and Frank Stella, who also explore the pictorial potential of parallel and overlapping lines – a common vocabulary of early printmakers.

While it is clichéd to say that history repeats itself, it is also easy to see how the history of art leaves its mark and re-emerges in new forms. The artists of Gemini G.E.L., like their sixteenth and seventeenth-century predecessors, have made prints and multiples that embody and re-shape earlier forms and ideas, as well as invent new ones relevant to their time and place. Seeing the past and present together helps us see the trajectories that course through history, offering new perspectives on history, the present, and perhaps the future.