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*NOVEMBER 2022*  
"THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"

## Dialogues Across Time at Gemini G.E.L.



*Installation view, 2022, Dialogues Across Time, Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, New York, NY*

*Dialogues Across Time*

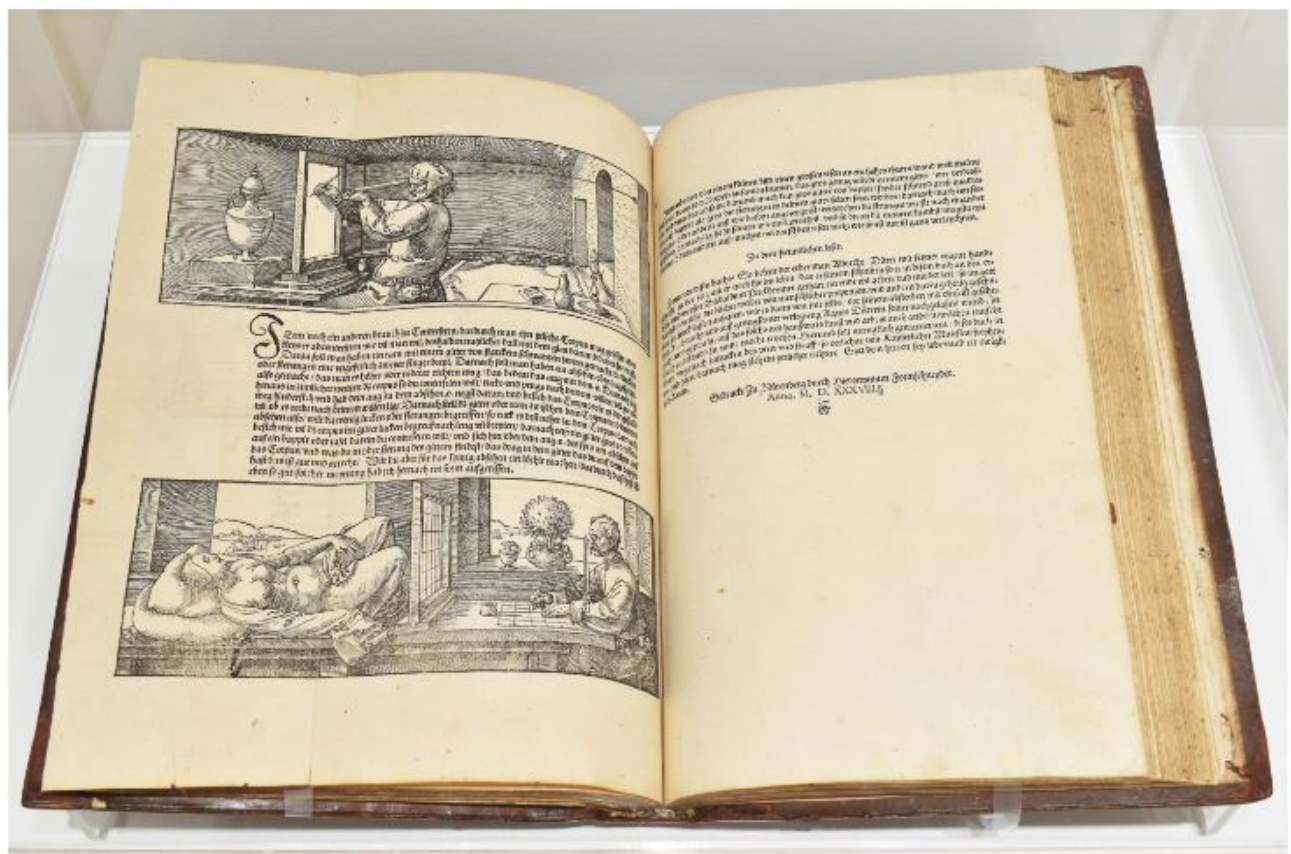
Gemini G.E.L. at [Joni Moisant Weyl](#)

525 West 24th st 4th floor, New York, NY

October 6, 2022 through January 14, 2023

By **STEPHEN WOZNAK**, November 2022

Eternal themes in fine art remind us that perpetual concerns in life are often one and the same; whether our woes, wills and weaknesses in Dante's harrowing hell or the hope and splendor poetically depicted in Monet's favored Parc Monceau location landscapes. Artists, of course, can't circumvent this dynamic between art and life, nor would we, as audiences, want it any other way. But for the consummate professional, who must draw from as much history and tested technique in their chosen creative field as the life right before them, it's critical to understand their medium and interests featured in the work of the deep, as well as recent, past. The current edition exhibition, *Dialogues Across Time*, on view in Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl through January 14, 2023, shows us many key overlaps between works that span the ages from such far-and-near artists as Albrecht Dürer and Susan Rothenberg to Francesco Fontana and Vija Celmins. Some of these are conscious nods made by the artists featured in the show, though, more often, by the celebrated art historian and curator Susan Dackerman, who assembled this substantial collection of sixty works throughout the gallery.



Albrecht Dürer, (1471-1528), *Vier Bücher von Menschlicher Proportion*, 1528, *Nuremberg Book with woodcuts and text, 12 1/16 x 8 1/4 x 1 1/8" (30.6 x 21 x 2.8 cm)*

Let's start with the fundamentals of form. This exhibition gives us a line-drawn image of the classic Vitruvian Man made famous by Leonardo da Vinci in 1490, but here created by Dürer, as the 16th century woodcut print from his posthumously-published book, *Vier Bücher von Menschlicher Proportion*, which includes informative text and measurements, as well as details about scale and proportions – both ideal and unusual – for artists to learn and use when rendering the human figure. Contemporary artist Jonathan Borofsky indeed follows suit with several color-dense lithographs in the print series *Male/Female* from 2000, which feature overlapping imagery of almost-silhouetted female and male figures, limbs outstretched, centered on the page. They do something interesting: create an activated, vibrating, abstract third figure along the points of their union, perhaps giving birth to cooperative efforts and acceptance of any ostensible differences between the two.



Jonathan Borofsky, *Male / Female*, 2000, 16-color screenprint, 25 3/4" x 18 1/2" (64.1x47cm), Edition of 45, #15

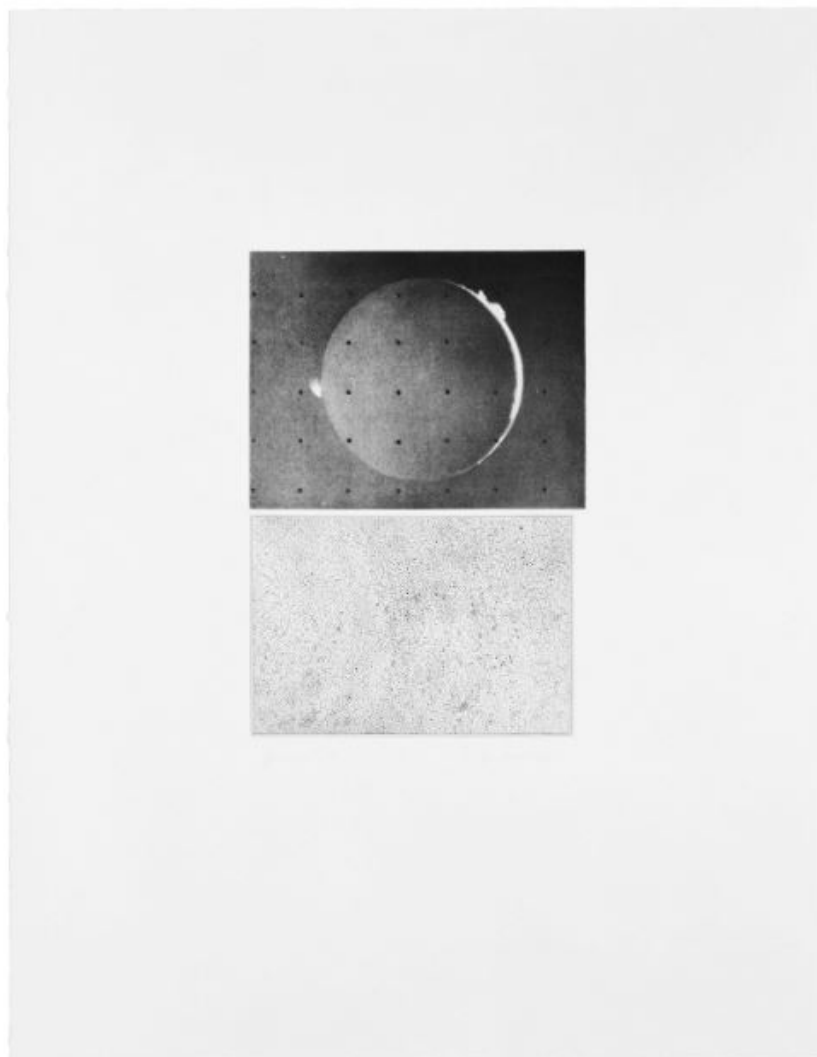


*Jonathan Borofsky, Installation view*



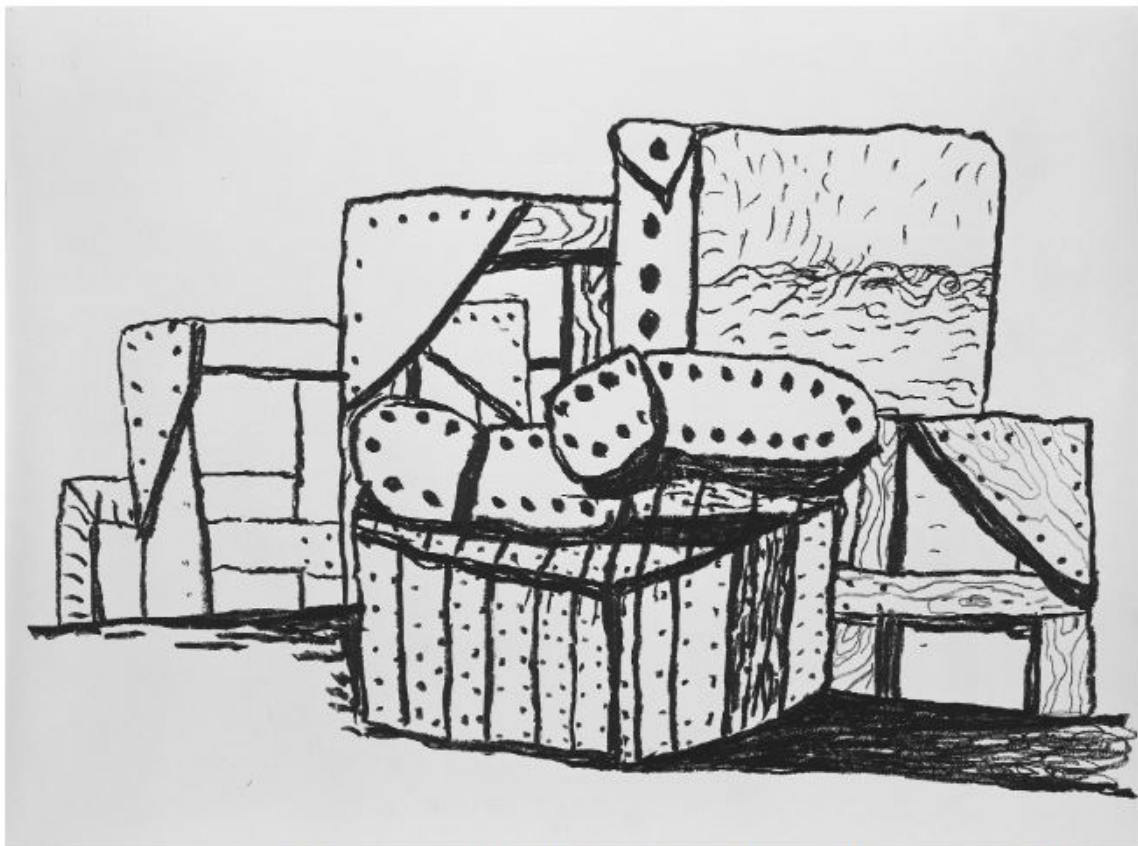
*Francesco Fontana (1580-1656), Novae Coelestium, terrestriumque rerum observationes, 1646, Published by Gaffarum, Naples, Book with etchings, woodcuts and text, 7.8" x 5.5" (20 x 14 cm), Courtesy of Mickey Cartin Collection*

Another pairing of the past and present arises between 15<sup>th</sup> century astronomer Francesco Fontana and artist Vija Celmins. Fontana was among the very first to see and record Mars and other nearby planets in our solar system with his own hand-constructed telescopes. In fact, he traced the projected outlines of the observable planets – as close to a photo as you could get at the time – to help make a collection of print images in the book *Novae Coelestium, Terrestriumque Rerum Observations*, which translates as, “The New Heavens as Observed from Earth.” His etching, featured in the show, looks as if it is the moon to our planet. It is similar to the top half of the stacked mezzotint/etching created by contemporary artist Vija Celmins based on a space agency photo of one of Jupiter’s eighty moons atop a reverse image of a constellation. Both are essentially black and white and either gridded by paper folds, in the case of Fontana, or the classic Ts, Ls and Xs used as reference marks in popular NASA shots featured in Celmins’ work. Both present blunt, yet eerie and elegant heavenly bodies touched just enough by each artist to collect the vastness of the subjects into an accessible image worthy of a deep philosophical – or even a cursory – review.



Vija Celmins, *Jupiter Moon - Constellation*, 1983 3-color mezzotint/etching, 23 3/4" x 18 1/2" (60.3x47cm), Edition of 48, #4

The moody portrait commission works of Rembrandt van Rijn are many and varied in the painted form for which he is famous among Dutch Masters. Rembrandt similarly handled editioned etchings and drypoint prints, such as *Jan Lutma, Goldsmith* from 1656. In this modest seven-inch high print, we see a bearded Lutma, seated next to a hammer and punch on a nearby side table, gripping his work – a gold candlestick. It's clear that these items help indicate Lutma's trade, but also gave Rembrandt more intricate objects to depict the mysterious deep shades and tones he is known to explore in his work. Other artists in *Dialogues* present tools and media of their trade, as well. Philip Guston's 1-color lithograph, *Studio Forms* from 1980, shows us a small mountain range of the backs of stretched art canvases. In Guston's *Easel*, another litho of the era, we see a painting on an easel that features a distinctly Sisyphean stone on a hill, and what looks to be a piece of club-like wood with several large nails driven into it, alluding to a sort of death knell, sacrifice or even an abstract crucifixion. The tools shown in these and other pieces serve to remind us about the real toil and necessary rigors of studio life, not just the desired outcome of a work or the celebration of a depicted subject.



*Philip Guston, Studio Forms, 1980, 1-color lithograph, 32" x 42 1/2" (81.3x108cm), Edition of 100*

I took a careful look at the works in the show over the course of a few hours and was lucky to see a few, small, abstract Richard Serra prints laid out on flat files for a buyer. Included was an approximately 2'x2' square edition of the deepest matte black, featuring an almost stucco-like texture on paper, entitled *Elevational Weight I*. It was a reminder of the tactile impression that prints and other media editions can make upon viewers. Multiples don't just reproduce another of an artist's work into a flat format, ready for framing and sale. Far from it. They are truly dynamic, distinct works unto themselves. As artist Robert Motherwell indicated, "In printmaking, I essentially use the same process as in painting with *one* important exception: to try, with sensitivity to the medium, to emphasize what printing can do best – better than, say, painting, collaging, watercolor, drawing or whatever. Otherwise, the artist expresses the same vision in graphics that he or she does in their other work."

I was surprised by the omission of early Chinese book pages from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, which essentially ignited the advent of reproducible printing or maybe a few prime examples of activist signs created during key points of social and legal history. Perhaps, they are a hard find or didn't add up to the themes, respectively, created for *Dialogues*.

Ultimately, *Dialogues Across Time* is a well-made exhibition, astutely curated and beautifully hung in the space that now makes up the Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl galleries. If you have a chance to see this show, do it, and also check out Print Center New York's *Visual Record: The Materiality of Sound in Print* on the ground floor of the same building where Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl lived for over ten years. It's a pertinent pairing that reminds viewers about the remarkable power of editioned fine art in its many striking and unexpected formats connected through history.

The artists included in *Dialogues Across Time* are:

Albrecht Dürer

John Baldessari

Jonathan Borofsky

Vija Celmins

Ronald Davis

Tacita Dean

Francesco Fontana

Philip Guston

Peter Halt

Ann Hamilton

Ellsworth Kelly

Toba Khedoori

Roy Lichtenstein

Bruce Nauman

Rembrandt van Rijn

Dorothea Rockburne

Susan Rothenberg

Analia Saban

Richard Serra

Martin Schongauer

Frank Stella

Richard Tuttle

Franz West

Terry Winters

*Dialogues Across Time* is on view in Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl from October 6, 2022 – January 14, 2023 in New York City. **WM**



#### STEPHEN WOZNIAK

Stephen Wozniak is a professional fine artist, writer, and motion picture and television actor based in Los Angeles, California. He earned a B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art and attended Johns Hopkins University. To learn more go to: [www.stephenwozniakart.com](http://www.stephenwozniakart.com) and [www.stephenwozniak.com](http://www.stephenwozniak.com). Follow Stephen on Instagram at [@stephenwozniakart](https://www.instagram.com/stephenwozniakart).

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