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**DE KOONING SCULPTURES, 1972-1974
NOVEMBER 5 – DECEMBER 19, 2015****OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 6-8 PM**

(New York, NY)— Skarstedt is pleased to present an exhibition of sculptures by renowned artist Willem de Kooning at their Upper East Side gallery. Featuring ten sculptures made between 1972-74, this exhibition will bring together works modeled by de Kooning himself rather than examples enlarged from existing forms, which demonstrate the artist's skill and inventiveness in this medium. *De Kooning Sculptures, 1972-1974* will be on view at **Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street)** from November 5 through December 19, and the exhibition will be accompanied by a detailed catalogue.

For de Kooning, the exploration of sculpture—which he began at the age of 65—was intended as an extension of the paintings for which he is widely known and acclaimed. His first sculptures were created in the summer of 1969, when he modeled small figures in clay. De Kooning's sculptures retain many of the qualities of his paintings—notably, the sense of movement and emotion captured through abstraction. However, rather than in gestural brushstrokes, his figures were rendered in wet and malleable clay and later cast in bronze. He handled the material much like he did oil paint, appreciating its 'freshness'— particularly the freedom it granted in that he could deconstruct a work at any time. "In some ways, clay is even better than oil," de Kooning admitted in 1972. "You can work and work on a painting but you can't start over again with the canvas like it was before you put that first stroke down. And sometimes, in the end, it's no good, no matter what you do. But with clay, I cover it with a wet cloth and come back to it the next morning and if I don't like what I did, or changed my mind, I can break it down and start over. It's always fresh."¹

While most sculptors at the time had abandoned clay for steel, de Kooning explored the medium and kept the art of modeling alive. "Of his generation of Abstract Expressionist painters, de Kooning is the only one, besides Barnett Newman, to have sustained an interest in sculpture-making for a substantial amount of time."² Revisiting the rhetoric of European sculpture of the fifties, his work marked a total departure from what was happening in sculpture in the early to mid-seventies.

One of the 'action painters', de Kooning used sculpture as another outlet with which to explore abstract forms. Just as his manipulation of paint created highly charged moments,

¹ Elderfield, John, *de Kooning: A Retrospective*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2011, p. 411.

² Elderfield, John, *de Kooning: A Retrospective*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2011, p. 405.



his roughly modeled sculptures retain a sense of immediacy in their melting, oozing shapes. Their tactile forms capture the essence of figures, from the completely abstract to the more identifiable—for example, *Clamdigger*, his first major sculpture—inspired by men digging for clams along the beaches near his home and studio in East Hampton. De Kooning's work in the medium quickly forged its own shape, meriting its own place in the spotlight.

About Willem de Kooning

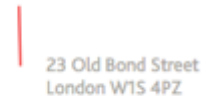
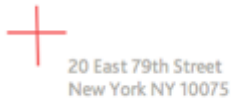
Willem de Kooning (b. April 24, 1904, d. March 19, 1997) was a Dutch-born American artist who became one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century.

De Kooning's work has been exhibited widely throughout the United States and abroad. His works have been included in thousands of exhibitions and are in the permanent collections of many art institutions abroad, including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London; and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and in America such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. He was awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964, among other honors.

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Image Credit: Willem de Kooning, *Hostess*, 1973, bronze, 49 x 37 x 29 inches (124.5 x 94 x 73.7 cm.) © 2015 The Willem de Kooning Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

About Skarstedt



Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The New York gallery's program focuses on artists of the late Twentieth Century whose work explores concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Skarstedt opened its London space at 23 Old Bond Street in 2012 with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. Skarstedt London presents exhibitions and publications devoted to the gallery's established area of expertise while also seeking to evolve and expand its focus. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach through high-quality exhibitions and collaborations with top international museums and private collections.

Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21st Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition *Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings*, adding to the gallery's existing



locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. The additional gallery space enables Skarstedt to expand on its core program of museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, John Baldessari, Georg Baselitz, George Condo, Carroll Dunham, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Günther Förg, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Robert Mapplethorpe, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Andy Warhol, Franz West, and Christopher Wool.

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