

SKARSTEDT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PORTRAITS

NOVEMBER 10 – DECEMBER 17, 2016

20 East 79th Street



Skarstedt is pleased to announce *Portraits*, an exhibition of paintings, photographs and works on paper by twenty-two artists over a fifty-five year period. This exhibition explores the evolution of the role the portrait has played in society and artists' unique approach to the genre. *Portraits* will be on view from November 10 – December 17, 2016 at Skarstedt's Upper East Side gallery.

During the revival of lifelike portraiture in the fifteenth century, portraits were an elite privilege, meant to represent the sitter's physical attributes while also conveying social status. The traditional portrait also relied on a standard pose, which defined the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "A painting, drawing, photograph or engraving of a person, especially one depicting only the face or head or shoulders."¹ *Portraits* explores this definition and pushes its boundaries, displaying the multiple and wide-ranging ways in which artists have explored and exploited the genre.

Utilizing portraiture as a framework, George Condo gives a humble subject a monumental presence in *Old Man Portrait* (2011). While conveying slightly grotesque features, Condo captures the image of this man in a formal manner while exploiting the scale of traditional portraits. Ragged and craggily with only a wisp of white hair on the back of his head, the old man is ironically portrayed with a distinguished presence.

Throughout her career, Cindy Sherman has pushed the definition of self-portraiture by photographing herself in a variety of personas, blurring the roles of sitter and artist while investigating female stereotypes and identity. In Sherman's *Untitled #138* (1984), the artist critiques the clichés of the fashion industry, introducing a woman with disheveled hair, a psychotic grin, and with closer inspection, blood on her hands. With her unsettling model, Sherman uses the portrait genre to craft a caricature of the codified beauty celebrated in fashion advertisements.

Also interested in the implications of female representation in advertising, Barbara Kruger enhances the content of her portraits by introducing text. In *Untitled (Fate)*, 2001/2006, Kruger zooms in on a portrait of a Marilyn Monroe type and superimposes the word "FATE" through the center of the composition. While Monroe, a symbol of modern femininity, is the subject of countless portraits, most notably Andy Warhol's iconic works, Kruger moves beyond precedents by involving a range of meaning through text. The artist introduces an essential strategy in

¹ Portrait. Def. 1. *Oxford Dictionarionaries.com*. Oxford Dictionaries, (n.d.). Web. 1 Nov. 2016.

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advertising, the combination of images and language used to provoke emotion from the viewer. Particularly in today's social media driven culture, Kruger's text-associated portraits have attained a new level of relevancy.

Exhibited artists include Georg Baselitz, Yi Chen, George Condo, John Coplans, Eric Fischl, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jonathan Meese, Albert Oehlen, Paulina Olowska, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Nicola Tyson, Paloma Varga Weisz, and Andy Warhol.

Image Credit: Albert Oehlen, *Selbstporträt*, 1983, oil on canvas. 26 3/8 x 19 11/16 in. (67 x 50 cm.) © Albert Oehlen.

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.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt's new London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James's, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as 'ministerial street' in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.

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: Justin Adian, 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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