

Jay DeFeo: The Language of Gesture
Craig Kauffman: Drawings from 1958-9

July 13 – September 14, 2019

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to present *Jay DeFeo: The Language of Gesture* and *Craig Kauffman: Drawings from 1958-9*. The exhibition is contemporaneous with the multiveneue Dilexi Gallery retrospective in San Francisco and Los Angeles (see below).

Jay DeFeo (1929-1989) continues to inspire generations of artists with her astonishingly diverse and innovative range of works, including paintings, collages, drawings and photographs. The exhibition features a rich selection of paintings on paper that traces Jay DeFeo's revelatory art-making of the early 1950s. Beginning with her arrival in Paris on a post-graduate grant in the fall of 1951, through her extended stay in Florence in 1952 where she produced an astounding body of energized Abstract Expressionist works, to her return to her Berkeley studio in 1953, these works track the creation of DeFeo's palette and visual vocabulary that would inform her work for decades to come.

After time on the road in France, London, Morocco, Spain and Italy, including her crawling through prehistoric caves along the way, DeFeo settled for six months in Florence, where the pent-up visual experiences of historic and post-war Europe bloomed in an extraordinary burst of works. Working in a rented apartment in the Pensione Bertolini in Florence for six months and making her own tempera, DeFeo came alive with the full sense of herself as an artist, stating that *"It was during the Florence period, and it started in Paris, that I really came into my own..."*

The large-scale works on paper in this exhibition have all the energy and immediacy of DeFeo's canvases. Abstract shapes counterbalance gestural brushwork as the artist experiments with the duality of organic rhythms and geometric form, refinement and expressionism. Clifford Ross muses in his essay featured in the accompanying exhibition booklet: "In these works, we see her dancing back and forth between these two instincts. We watch as her brush drips, scrubs, doubles-back, leaps, circles, and declares—the paint gathering itself toward abstract configurations that emote on her behalf. And we watch as her wrist makes the same moves but with different intent, to let us see the world with her. Windows, water, buildings, trees, animals—and perhaps even spirits."

DeFeo's art is included in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York, British Museum, London, Centre Pompidou, Paris, The Menil Collection, Houston, Art Institute of Chicago, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among many others. DeFeo's works can also be seen in Los Angeles in the collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Norton Simon Museum, UCLA's Hammer Museum, and J. Paul Getty Museum. In 2013, the Whitney Museum of American Art presented *Jay DeFeo: A Retrospective*, featuring more than 150 seminal

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works by the artist. On June 28, 2019, the Whitney Museum of American Art opens *The Whitney's Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965* which will include DeFeo's monumental work, *The Rose* which will remain on view through June 2020.

Craig Kauffman (1932-2010) is often cited as a major contributor to the development of the clean, cool "L.A. Look," during the 1960s, with his luminous wall reliefs. However, by the late 1950s, Kauffman had already made his mark in West Coast abstract painting, with exhibits in Los Angeles and San Francisco that featured a loose, lyrical line in combination with open expanses and bold color. His early, influential paintings were highly regarded by peers as well as critics. An essential feature of those paintings was Kauffman's buoyant line, which comes directly from his drawings. This exhibition includes fifteen drawings that reveal the underlying ideas and processes for Kauffman's work. Like many painters, drawing was central to conception for Kauffman, whether the drawn line describes the contour of shape or demonstrates the process of abstraction. In this show, drawings from two series show clear links to Kauffman's paintings exhibited in his legendary 1958 solo show at Ferus Gallery, as well as 1958 and 1959 exhibits at Dilexi in San Francisco.

Lively, loose and skipping, the delicate lines of Kauffman's 1958 drawings were derived from the artist's fascination with overlapping bottle shapes and biomorphic, organic forms. Kauffman was aware of the mechanized figure paintings of Marcel Duchamp, and the frankly sensual work of Francis Picabia. The loose line in the 1958 drawings has been described by Los Angeles Times critic Leah Ollman as "delicate weaves of horizontal bands and sinuous verticals in feathered lines reminiscent of those made by a pattern tracing wheel."

Kauffman's work is represented in museum collections worldwide, including Art Institute of Chicago, Carnegie Museum of Art, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, Museum of Modern Art, New York, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Tate Gallery, London, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Participants of the Dilexi Gallery multivenue retrospective include Brian Gross Fine Art and Crown Point Press in San Francisco and Parker Gallery, Parrasch Heijnen Gallery and The Landing in Los Angeles.

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00am to 6:00pm. For additional information please contact Alisun Woolery at (310) 277-9953 or Alisun@marcselwynfineart.com.