

New Exhibition of Major Works on Paper from Hessel Collection Traces a Life of Collecting and the Intimacy of Drawing As an Artistic Practice

Featuring more than 50 modern and contemporary artists, *Closer to Life* Opens June 26
At CCS Bard Galleries as part of 30th Anniversary Season



Nicole Eisenman, *The Largest Woman*, 1994. Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York © Nicole Eisenman.

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (April 19, 2021)— As a cornerstone of its 30th anniversary season, the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (CCS Bard) presents an exhibition of contemporary drawing and works on paper from the collection of CCS Bard Co-Founder Marieluise Hessel, who dedicated her entire growing collection to the college for study. Comprising approximately 100 works by more than 50 artists, ***Closer to Life: Drawings and Works on Paper in the Marieluise Hessel Collection*** tracks four decades of collecting across three countries. Through works by artists including **Cecily Brown, Nicole Eisenman, Gabriel Orozco, Rashid Johnson, David Koloane, Sigmar Polke, Rosemarie Trockel, Nancy Spero, Hollis Sigler, Germán Venegas, and Nahum B. Zenil**, the exhibition focuses on drawing as a discrete, stand-alone practice, one that is often used by artists because of its immediacy and its ability to communicate a range of pressing subject matter.

On view in the CCS Bard Galleries from June 26 through October 17, 2021, *Closer to Life* is curated by Tom Eccles and Amy Zion and is accompanied by a comprehensive, fully illustrated, 380-page catalogue

of the Marieluise Hessel Collection of more than 300 works on paper. Edited by Tom Eccles and Amy Zion, the catalog includes contributions from Paul Chan, Joan Didion, Lynne Cooke, Gabriela Jauregui, and Michael Newman.

“The title of the exhibition *Closer to Life* refers to the intimacy of the act of drawing itself. The works on view, which extend beyond drawing *per se*, echo this sense of intimacy in the issues that they confront, and speak to the continuing vitality of works on paper as an artistic medium,” said Tom Eccles, *Closer to Life* co-curator and CCS Bard Executive Director. “This marks the first time CCS Bard has conducted an in-depth survey of these works on paper from the Hessel collection, which Marieluise has and continues to be so drawn to for their complexity and personal expression.”

Added exhibition co-curator Amy Zion, “Alongside the broader exploration of contemporary drawing, the exhibition traces the evolution of the collection, which is marked by Marieluise’s personal journey as a collector. *Closer to Life* will draw out resonances between the collection’s eclectic focal points, with particular attention to how artists have used and continue to use drawing to address political subject matter.”

Closer to Life is organized around four spheres of influence that reflect the geographic trajectory of Hessel’s life, from post-war Germany to her residence in Mexico City and on to New York City in the late ’80s and early ’90s, to her more recent concentration on contemporary art by Black artists, African artists, and artists from the African diaspora. The exhibition puts specific emphasis on Hessel’s most recent acquisitions and how they fit into the continuum of her decades-long commitment to collecting. The range and eclecticism of the collection is represented in the exhibition by more than strictly drawing, and includes collages, prints, artist books, and special editions drawn from the Center for Curatorial Studies’ extensive archives as well as a select number of paintings, photographs, and sculptures. Through works ranging from some of **Kara Walker**’s earliest wall cut-outs, to a wall of drawings and works on paper by **Rosemarie Trockel** selected by the artist herself, to very recent acquisitions from **Sable Elyse Smith** and **Ulrike Müller**, each of the gallery installations reflects the proximity of drawing to the artist and Hessel’s dedication to the depiction of the human figure as an essential act of examining the self and social relations.

Exhibition artists include: Kai Althoff, Deborah Barrett, Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Cecily Brown, Nick Cave, William Copley, Nicole Eisenman, General Idea, Isa Genzken, Robert Gober, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Rachel Harrison, Jörg Immendorff, Clotilde Jiménez, Rashid Johnson, Ray Johnson, Anselm Kiefer, Seydou Keïta, Martin Kippenberger, David Koloane, Imi Knoebel, Robert Kushner, Maria Lassnig, Charles LeDray, Robert Longo, Sol LeWitt, Carlos Mérida, Dan Miller, Ulrike Müller, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Gabriel Orozco, Cady Noland, Giuseppe Penone, Sigmar Polke, Arnulf Rainer, Gerhard Richter, Allen Ruppersberg, Peter Saul, Thomas Schütte, Hollis Sigler, Diane Simpson, Lorna Simpson, Sable Elyse Smith, Nancy Spero, Rosemarie Trockel, Germán Venegas, Danh Vo, Kara Walker, Franz Erhard Walther, David Wojnarowicz, and Nahum B. Zenil.

Exhibitions at CCS Bard are made possible with support from the Marieluise Hessel Foundation, the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Foundation, the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, the Board of Governors of the Center for Curatorial Studies, the CCS Bard Arts Council, and the Center’s Patrons, Supporters, and Friends.

About the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College

The Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (CCS Bard) is the leading international graduate program dedicated exclusively to curatorial studies, a field exploring the historical, intellectual, and social conditions that inform exhibition-making. With the Marieluise Hessel Collection of Contemporary Art at its core, alongside extensive and growing library and archival holdings, CCS Bard has served as an incubator for the most experimental and innovative practices in artistic and curatorial practice since its founding in 1990. Through its rigorous, interdisciplinary program and unmatched resources, CCS Bard provides unparalleled opportunities for students to research and organize museum exhibitions on an independent basis, and in so doing acts as a key platform for the next generation of curators, artists, and art world leaders in the earliest stages of their careers. CCS Bard receives support from a range of public and private foundations and individuals, including major support from the Luma Foundation.

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