



Nick Cave, *Hustle Coat* (detail), 2017. Mixed media including a trench coat, cast bronze hand, metal, costume jewelry, watches, and chains. ©Nick Cave. Photo by James Prinz Photography. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

ARMAN, *Big Parade* (detail), 1976. Accumulation of welded trombones. © 2017 Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee.

OBJECT out LOUD: **ARMAN** and **NICK CAVE**

October 15, 2017 – January 7, 2018

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Curator's Preface

On the brink of its dissolution, the Soviet Union commemorated the 1917 October Revolution for the last time in 1990. At eight, I remember attending the parade with my parents in Provideniya, a small urban-type settlement where I was born, situated on the Komsomolskaya Bay—named after the political youth division of the Communist Party—right across the Bering Strait from Alaska. Although my family lived in Latvia, my parents, due to their professions, were implicated in the northern seaport expansion that involved them relocating from the Baltic to help realize the government's ambition to double the town's population. Provideniya has a long lineage associated with labor and settlement. Built and settled by prisoners dispatched to forced labor camps at the height of the Stalin-era, it comprises a region of many of the worst gulag prisons in Russia.

West of the region, in the Ural Mountains' city of Biysk, lies a present-day penal colony that has recently been brought into the spotlight by Masha Alyokhina. A member of the feminist art collective Pussy Riot, she was imprisoned by Vladimir Putin for "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" after the group sung a protest song in Moscow's Orthodox cathedral. Alyokhina was sentenced to the barracks where she worked twelve to fourteen hour days sewing police uniforms. Subsequently, she and her fellow Pussy Riot members have become somewhat of celebrities and international symbols of objection against state-authored oppression. In a country that penalizes dissent and purposely forgets its past—particularly the circumstances of the October uprising that instrumentalized an entire avant-garde art movement to visualize the socialist cause—generating a novel aesthetic of protest outside the government code was the group's most radical act. And rendering an anonymous persona, costumed in brightly colored dresses, balaclavas, and acid-hued tights, was their biggest transgression.

When conceiving the title of this exhibition, I thought about Pussy Riot: their seizing of public space, the women as interruptors, destroyers of conformity, active dreamers for a different outcome yet to come. I also considered Nick Cave and Arman in this regard, as artists who demonstratively and performatively oppose order. Arman's formal concerns are rooted in class, labor, and economy, while Cave's impetus behind his wearable sculpture is the assembly of garments and subjects who wear and gather to activate their potential for social change.

Object Out Loud: Arman and Nick Cave features these two artists separated by time and place and is designed as a visual dialogue. Incorporating work that is overtly sculptural and fundamentally political, the exhibition asserts the power of artists to transform everyday materials into powerful signifiers. Though emerging from vastly different moments and backgrounds, both Arman (1928-2005) and Nick Cave (b. 1959) share a love for material culture, from colorful sequins and chains to buttons and figurines. The result is a visual matrix that inspires the double meaning of the exhibition's title—the tangible thing in the world and the verb expressing disapproval and opposition. The exhibition brings these meanings together in an animated dialogue spanning two visions and generations.

Olga Dekalo, Assistant Curator



NICK CAVE's (b. 1959) sculptural works and garments—constructed out of materials such as yarn, toys, ceramic birds, tapestries, chains, and figurines—stem from the artist's personal relationship to culture and identity. In 1992, four Los Angeles policemen—three of them white—were acquitted of the savage beating of Rodney King, an African-American man. The incident was recorded by a bystander and broadcast into millions of homes across America and worldwide. Fury over the acquittal—stoked by years of racial and economic inequality in the city—spilled over into the streets, resulting in five days of rioting in Los Angeles. The riots provoked Nick Cave to make his first *Soundsuit*. As a black male artist, Cave entered the conversation about race and police force by way of his adorned suits of armor that visually externalize his own vulnerability and a desire to shield the body. Channeling his reaction to violence, racism, and profiling, his first suit—with protruding twigs resembling defensive porcupine quills—rendered the artist's body invisible and created a powerful persona.



Nick Cave, *Soundsuit* (1992). © Nick Cave.

His subsequent *Soundsuits* continued to conceal the wearer's appearance while taking on a celebratory and playful dimension. An avid collector, Cave began sourcing vintage objects and personal items, such as doilies and materials he associates with childhood. Speaking to the autobiographical aspect of the suits he says, “An object is located within a specific time and place and can take us back....My memories are very significant. In terms of the objects I utilize, it's where the emotion lies...where *what was* and *what is* intersect and become a reality.”

Cave's abundant accumulation, *Wall Relief* (2012) builds on the artist's approach of constructing complex imaginative environments that grow out of personal experiences. Before creating the *Soundsuits*, Cave made large, constructive paintings while he was a graduate student at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in the late 1980s. The sculpture, which Cave refers to as a “painting,” cites his own upbringing surrounded by collectibles, such as the porcelain bird figurines and domestic textiles that are integrated into the quilt. In the process of selecting these items, Cave thinks about objects that belonged to his grandparents, “how sacred they were to them, how they viewed them as artistic treasures, as cherished charms.”

The *Soundsuits* and other works on view allude to movement and sound. Cave says, “sound doesn't always have to be heard. Sound can also be created by how a pattern is set up on a surface—how it moves across the surface, how light reflects the surface... Sound can also be through feeling, through color, through texture.” He routinely brings his garments to life in the



context of live performances that engage choreographers, dancers, musicians, and large groups of audiences. These highly anticipated events have occupied city landmarks such as Grand Central Terminal, Atlanta's Ponce City Market, Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, and the redesigned Navy Pier in Chicago.

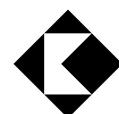
The short feature film *Up Right: Detroit* (2015) stems from his commitment to community partnerships and features Detroit's LGBTQ youth who, in Cave's words, perform an "act of initiation and a preparation of the mind, body, spirit, and selfhood." The film—set in the historic Michigan Theatre—features the performers as they are costumed by the artist and his team, accompanied by an a cappella group, just before stepping out onto the city streets, transformed. By and large, the work visually captures diverse identities in a time when civil rights are increasingly threatened, and as artists and individuals seek new approaches to address histories of oppression and the possibilities for change.

Right Right (2014) addresses incidents of brutality against African Americans that remain the impetus for Cave's work. At the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the fall of 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made a speech at Oberlin College, saying, "The time is always right to do what's right." Delivered during a particularly violent time in American history, with riots igniting across the country and civil rights leaders being assassinated, King fought for legislative action to enact fundamental protections for people of color. Cave evokes King's call to action by presenting viewers with the phrase—albeit not fully readable—attached to an object that suggests engagement but is retired from activity. The hand element with the crossed fingers accompanies the drooping badminton net and signals a desire for a favorable outcome, yet to arrive, in today's struggle to protect black lives.

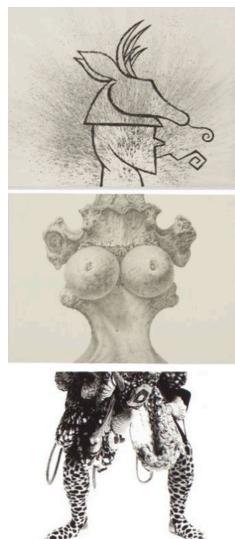
The *Hustle Coat* (2017)—a classic trench coat lined with jewels, watches, and chains—builds upon Cave's overall themes of adornment, body armor, and bling, and further emphasizes how dress codes contribute to our identity. The work elicits the aesthetic of power as well as popular portrayals of street hustlers and crime bosses seen on television and music videos. Speaking to his interest in costume and its relationship to culture he says, "I'm totally consumed by the special attire that has a powerful and meaningful purpose within a culture."

Drawing further connections between status and power, Cave's opulent sculpture, *Rescue* (2013), features a found ceramic dog, regally perched on an antique shoeshine table and enshrined by a grotto-like den. *Rescue's* armature envelops the animal with decadent dripping beads, birds, and flowers and evokes Baroque portraits of empresses with lapdogs. Escaping the fate of being discarded and forgotten, Cave's figurine is assigned a post to guard an ornamental wishbone. Cave explores the symbolism of the animal and considers the dog's association with status as well as how the term "dawg" circulates in hip-hop culture as a moniker for brotherhood, respect, and power.

Also on view in the exhibition are two lithographs that Cave credits with expanding his accumulative aesthetic and generating new ideas and forms for his sculptural work. The small-scale lithograph, *Untitled* (2015) is part of a suite titled *Exquisite Corpse*, which Cave made in



collaboration with seventeen other artists. The series takes its title from a Surrealist parlor game in which participants would contribute a collage element that gets folded to conceal the larger part of what they compose. Each drawing, in effect, contributes to an accumulation of multiple hands that often results in a strange, humorous, and provocative work. Cave creates his own portion of the figure by digitally composing images of his *Soundsuits*. This work as well as *Amalgam (brown)* 2015, further reveals his process of transformation, in this case translating his life-size *Soundsuits* into two-dimensional space.



The French-American artist **ARMAN** (1928-2005), along with an experimental group of French artists in the 1960s, known as New Realists, increasingly sought to connect their work with everyday life. Arman, in particular, found inspiration from the street—the city's bustling sound and action, shop windows, and discarded relics—and built his artistic career around amassing objects brought about by the flood of consumer goods in postwar France and the U.S. He said, “I didn’t discover the principle of accumulation; it discovered me. As a witness of my society, I have always been very much involved in the pseudo biological cycle of production, consumption, and destruction. And for a long time, I have been anguished by the fact that one of its most conspicuous material results is the flooding of our world with junk and rejected odd objects.”

The volatile period of civil unrest in France during May 1968 brought a social revolution—punctuated by demonstrations and labor strikes—and led many artists to reconsider the value of their artistic output. Arman’s obsession with consumer culture prompted him to imitate and exaggerate the phenomena of excess. The exhibition captures the excitement, complexity, and activist nature of Arman’s oeuvre by foregrounding the object interventions he termed accumulations. On view are the artist’s many transformations of musical instruments, cultural souvenirs, personal belongings, refuse, and other materials that are multiplied and, at times, destroyed. Arman’s involvement in the Civil Rights movement and subsequent boycott at the



inauguration of Nice's new contemporary museum in 1990 further ignited his aim to propose new realities, both tangible and imaginary.

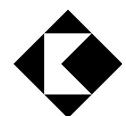
A major work in the exhibition is a 30-minute video documentation of Arman's public "action with a sociological content." Collaborating with his partner Corice Canton and photographer Alain Bizo, Arman fabricated the likes of an American middle-class apartment at John Gibson Gallery in New York City. Assembled with meticulous detail, the installation included everything from functional electronics to a fully stocked bar that the artist single-handedly destroyed with an axe, a sledgehammer, and a box-cutter. Reflecting the phenomena of artistic Happenings of the 1960s and 1970s, this work epitomizes the spirit of bringing art into everyday life. Most adamantly, **Conscious Vandalism** (1975) represents the ephemeral quality of art that rejected consumerism. Arman's other socially minded actions included a performance work titled *America Cut in Two*, 1970 (not on view), with the proceeds benefitting the Black Panther Party. He asked participants to contribute objects to his gallery where he divided and sold them back to the owners, perfectly capturing America's split values, then and now.



Arman and Corice Canton Arman with members of the Black Panther Party, New York, 1970

Departing from Surrealist and Cubist methods of composing three-dimensional box constructions, Arman pioneered a new form of assemblage that appropriated commercially produced and discarded materials. Made the same year Arman became a U.S. citizen and officially shed his surname, Fernandez, **Demi-Cuivres** (1973)—comprised of sliced-up trumpets immersed in concrete—is symbolic of the artist's reckoning with his European and artistic heritage. Instruments play a significant role in Arman's career and often oscillate between their reconstitution and destruction. Addressing the reproach for breaking instruments, Arman stated, "I love music too much to be able to break quality instruments. I break mass-production violins. Having said that, the musical instrument is no more respectable than a pair of shoes...The intrinsic value of what I break is not superior to the value which other people use. We waste whole forests to make posters for pathetic little electoral campaigns..."

Throughout his career, Arman was seduced by the formal qualities of musical instruments. Made in the same year, **Nuits de Chine** and **Big Parade** (1975) both accentuate the repetition of the

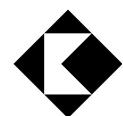


instruments' striking mechanics. Referring to these sculptures as "founding works," Arman collected and built the pieces over time. Arman deemed the accumulation of accordions particularly successful, commenting that "a certain amount of qualities converged at a certain moment of their creation." The titles *Nuits de Chine* (*China Nights*) and *Big Parade* nod to popular music and film, referring to Anny Flore's 1955 French song and the 1925 American silent antiwar drama, respectively.

The series ***Robot Portraits***—or, more literally, character sketches—formalized Arman's accumulation aesthetic in the early 1960s. Arman aggregated personal objects belonging to his friends and collaborators, as well as his own, to explore the symbolic power of one's belongings and to offer an intimate look into personalities. Arman completed his first *Robot Portrait* of his friend and fellow artist Yves Klein in 1960. ***Portrait-Robot de Corice*** (1973) depicts his partner and spouse Corice Canton Arman, whom he met in Paris in 1968 while she was working in fashion. As described by Corice herself, the artist appropriated objects such as articles of clothing, handwritten notes, jewelry, as well as her brand new Louis Vuitton handbag.

Arman declared that he must know his portrait models "not just superficially but over time intuitively and completely." The statement is especially applicable to his relationship to the classical composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. From a young age, Arman was exposed to many art forms by his father—who himself was an amateur cellist—including antique dealing and painting, but no other passion so closely resembled his love for art than classical music. He compared Mozart to the libertine modern poet Arthur Rimbaud and referred to his work as "inhuman, almost of another world." Arman renders his portrait, ***Robot Portrait of Mozart 3*** (1992), with a technical sophistication and an emotional reach that Mozart himself often achieved. The visual language of the wall relief—comprised of sliced string instruments, grouped horns, and a star-studded blue canvas—symbolically captures Mozart's famous harmonic dissonance that has been characterized as both sensuous and violent. In that vein, Arman's inclusion of fragmented and sliced instruments along with an invisible hand playing the piano offers a sense of liveliness and a bravado that reveals the artist's deep understanding of his subject.

Although Arman has said that his appreciation for experimental music came more from the head than the heart, he and the avant-garde composer John Cage (1912–1992) shared the radical approach of creating compositions out of what already exists in the world—whether it be found material or sound. Exemplifying this method of working sculpturally, Arman created ***Robot Portrait of John Cage*** (1987) by assembling emblems of the composer's personal and professional interests. A replica of Cage's famous prepared piano—a piano with sound-altering objects placed between or on top of the strings and hammers—centers the work, surrounded by texts and scores Cage read and authored. Out of the many personal items included, mushrooms, both illustrated and actual, stand out. Cage linked the experience of foraging with discovering hidden sounds in the environment. He said, "I have come to the conclusion that much can be learned about music by devoting oneself to the mushroom."



The trashcan series, *Poubelles*, marked a significant period of innovation in Arman's career. Capturing the moment when artists became keenly interested in ways objects can function as tools and signifiers of use and memory, Arman set a historic precedent in 1960 by filling an entire Parisian gallery with street trash. Subsequently, he made accumulations of discarded materials that were more personal. Between 1970 and 1973, Arman asked his fellow New York artists Christo, Sol LeWitt, Robert Rauschenberg, Joseph Kosuth, and others, to fill Plexiglas containers with refuse from their studios. Arman particularly admired the artist duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude for their ability to circumvent the gallery system by creating large-scale, public works that were ephemeral in nature. Speaking affectionately about the pair, Arman said, "There is a great priestess called Jeanne-Claude. Christo is the go-between for the gods. The crowd gathers to see miracles. The signs Christo traces do not last, and that is what is pleasing."



Arman outside Iris Clert Gallery in Paris on occasion of his exhibition *Le Plein (Fill Up)*, October 25, 1960

Arman's first series of mature works titled *Cachets*, or stamped works (1954-1959), signaled a departure from abstract painting techniques through the artist's use of a functional object such as the stamp to layer a two-dimensional surface. Throughout his career, Arman conflated painting and sculpture by integrating three-dimensional objects into canvases and reliefs. He turned to more traditional mark making toward the end of his career with a series of ink prints that alluded to his sculptural accumulations, particularly those comprised of musical instruments. The work's title, *Maldoror* (2001), alludes to a nonlinear long prose poem that Surrealists cited as a major inspiration and suggests multiple, disparate narratives combined into a single visual form.

Two of Arman's works in the exhibition pay a tribute to New Yorkers—*Liberty Lighthouse* (1988) and *In Favor of Admission* (1976). *In Favor of Admission* is one of two colorful collages—one is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York—Arman composed out of the Met's recycled admission buttons. He considered the Museum a model for its inclusive approach to representing Eastern and Western art traditions and described its holdings as "excellence produced by all human cultures." Notable that almost a decade later, at the height of Institutional Critique, when artists challenged the conventions of art institutions, his sentiment was famously challenged by the anonymous feminist artist group the Gorilla Girls who advocated for the Met to be more inclusive of women artists.



Checklist of Works

Righter Gallery: ARMAN

Maldoror, 2001

India ink on paper

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Robot Portrait of Mozart 3, 1992

Mixed media in wood box on square piano

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Portrait-Robot of Arman, 1992

Accumulation of personal belongings in a wood box with Plexiglas cover

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Liberty Lighthouse, 1988

Cast bronze Statue of Liberty with accumulation of spotlights

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Robot Portrait of John Cage, 1987

Mixed media in wood box with Plexiglas cover

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

In Favor of Admission, 1976

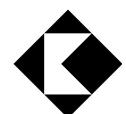
Plexiglas and metal collage

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Nuits de Chine, 1976

Accumulation of accordions

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee



Big Parade, 1976

Accumulation of welded trombones

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Conscious Vandalism, 1975

Film transferred to video

Archival C-prints

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Portrait-Robot de Corice, 1973

Various personal items, including ten pairs of shoes and ten pairs of glasses

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Christo's Refuse, 1973

Accumulation of studio refuse in Plexiglas box

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee

Demi-Cuivres, 1973

Sliced trumpets partially embedded in concrete inside wood box

Courtesy of the Arman Marital Trust, Corice Arman, Trustee



Beitzel Gallery: NICK CAVE

Hustle Coat, 2017

Mixed media including a trench coat, cast bronze hand, metal, costume jewelry, watches, and chains

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Soundsuit, 2016

Mixed media including a large toy horse, toys, gloves, wire, metal, and a mannequin

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Up Right: Detroit, 2015

Film by The Right Brothers

Digital video with sound

20 minutes, 16 seconds

Commissioned by Cranbrook Art Museum and created in collaboration with

The Ruth Ellis Center, Detroit

Untitled, 2015

Single-color lithograph, dusted with photostatic toner

Edition of 45

Courtesy of the artist and Tamarind Institute, University of New Mexico

Amalgam (brown), 2015

Four-color lithograph, edition of 95

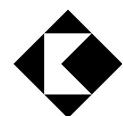
Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

From the collection of Sara and Joshua Slocum

Right Right, 2014

Mixed media including vintage indoor badminton set, metal chain and letters, and wooden hand

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York



Soundsuit, 2013

Mixed media including fabric, crochet blanket, doilies, sequins, and a mannequin

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

From the collection of Sara and Joshua Slocum

Rescue, 2013

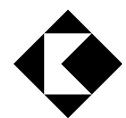
Mixed media including ceramic birds, metal flowers, ceramic mixed-breed dog, and antique cobbler bench

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Wall Relief, 2012

Mixed media including ceramic birds and metal flowers with patchwork quilt

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York



Biographies

NICK CAVE is an artist, educator and foremost a messenger, working between the visual and performing arts through a wide range of mediums including sculpture, installation, video, sound and performance. In a 2013 feature in *Interview Magazine*, Cave said of his project HEARD•NY, a large scale performance in Grand Central Terminal organized by Creative Time, "I was really thinking of getting us back to this dream state, this place where we imagine and think about now and how we exist and function in the world. With the state of affairs on the world, I think we tend not to take the time out to create that dream space in our heads." This is relevant to his practice as a whole.

Cave recently opened a massive immersive installation *Until* at MASS MoCA, October 15, 2016 - August 2017, and had a solo exhibition *Here Hear* on view at the Cranbrook Art Museum (2015). Other solo exhibitions include St. Louis Art Museum (2014-2015), the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (2014) and the Denver Art Museum (2013). Public collections include the Brooklyn Museum; Crystal Bridges; the Detroit Institute of Arts; the High Museum; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; the Norton Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Birmingham Museum of Art; the De Young Museum; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Orlando Museum of Art; the Smithsonian Institution; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others.

Cave has received several prestigious awards including the Americans for the Arts 2014 Public Art Network Year in Review Award (2014) in recognition of his Grand Central Terminal performance Heard - NY, Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2008), Artadia Award (2006), the Joyce Award (2006), Creative Capital Grants (2002, 2004 and 2005), and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2001). Cave received his MFA at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and is Professor and Chairman of the Fashion Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

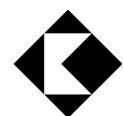
Nick Cave has been represented by Jack Shainman Gallery since 2006 when he had a show entitled *Soundsuits*. Other solo exhibitions at the gallery include *Recent Soundsuits* (2009), *Ever-After* (2011) and a two-part exhibition *Made by Whites for Whites* and *Rescue* (2014).

Born in Nice in 1928, **ARMAN**[d] Pierre Fernandez showed a precocious talent for painting and drawing as a child. Inspired by Vincent van Gogh, he signed his early work with his first name only; he retained a printer's 1958 misspelling of his name for the rest of his career. The son of an antiques dealer and amateur cellist, the artist absorbed an intense appreciation for music, the art of collecting and the cultivation of discriminating taste from an early age. After studying at the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs in Nice, Arman decamped to Paris to study art history at the Ecole du Louvre. His work in these early years focused on abstract paintings inspired by the work of Nicolas de Staël. An avid reader, Arman sought inspiration through books and art reviews, as well as during frequent road trips throughout Europe with artist friends from Nice, Claude Pascale and Yves Klein.

Arman is most associated with the Nouveau Réalisme (New Realism) movement that emerged in 1960, and which represented France's response to the trend of Pop art that was sweeping Europe and the United

States. Arman first emerged as an abstract painter, but soon rejected the style and began making sculpture. Arman's most notable work was preoccupied with the consequences of mass production: his *accumulations* often reflected on the identical character of amassed objects; his *Poubelles*, or "trash cans," considered waste and discarded material; and his *Colères*, or "rages," expressed an active refusal of excess that dominates everyday life. At his best, Arman delivered a powerful and chilling rejection of modernization and the culture of mass consumption. Later, he developed an aesthetic based on the act of destruction and commemorating the obliteration of objects.

Arman has been a subject of major national and international solo exhibitions worldwide that include Fondazione Terzo Pilastro, Rome (2017); Galerie Templon, Paris (2016); Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York (2013); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011); Helly Nahmad Gallery, New York (2008); Marlborough Gallery, New York (2006); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1991); John Gibson Gallery, New York (1975); and Iris Clert Gallery, Paris (1960). Public collections in the U.S.A. include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Allen Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio; among many others.



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