



Lichtenstein in Process
at the Katonah Museum of Art
March 29 – June 28, 2009

Katonah, NY -- *Lichtenstein in Process*, featuring 65 works by one of America's preeminent 20th century artists, opens on March 29 at the Katonah Museum of Art. Offering a rare glimpse of the pop artist's creative process, the exhibition focuses on sequences of serial preliminary sketches, drawings, and collages, dating the 1970s to the 1990s. Originally organized by the Fundación Juan March (in collaboration with the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation) and shown at the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, Cuenca, and the Museo d'Art Espanyol Contemporani, Palma, the exhibition has its US debut at the KMA, through June 28, and then travels to the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis.

More rapid in execution, smaller in format, more intimate in nature, Lichtenstein's sketches and drawings are shown alongside his collages, the last step before the finished paintings or sculptures. Curator Jack Cowart, Executive Director of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, writes:

"I think the artist's personal sourcebooks, clippings, sketchbooks, and many, many extant drawings and collages offer some of the best clues to his thoughts and process, plus his hand, touch and eye. In these works he is planning and scheming, musing on composition and source...here we do see the selective, editorial artist at work, effecting his trademark transformation of a known or given form or even a form he has thought up *freehand* into something uniquely his own, while pushing at the boundaries or capabilities of art media."

Beginning in the 1960s, Lichtenstein was inspired by the themes and images of mass culture, advertising, and the comic strip.

"Lichtenstein's art is simultaneously a critique and an incessantly

curious homage, further infused with autobiographical content and intention,” says Cowart. “All this eventually subverts our thinking into *his* terms more than our own.”

The exhibition catalogue includes commentary by art historian Avis Berman, with excerpts from interviews with Lichtenstein and several of his studio assistants, offering further insight to the artist’s work, style, and humor:

In the beginning I didn't even keep drawings. They just fell on the floor and were swept up.... They went out with the trash ... because they show a kind of give-and-take and change – adjustments – that disappear. My style is not one of having give-and-take, it just comes out miraculously. It's just the style, but it isn't the way it happens. I collage these paintings over and over again, so I'm really working with it in the same way you would with an expressionist work, but I don't want traces of all that activity going on. – Lichtenstein

Known for working on multiple projects at once, Lichtenstein’s assistants confer on his hard-working ethic, one that equaled his sheer love of painting. “All Roy wanted to do was paint,” shares Richard Dimmler. “That’s it. He got up, we had to have lunch during the day, but otherwise he went back and painted until [his wife] Dorothy told him he had to stop and do something social for the evening.”

On an average studio workday, Dimmler says: “Roy would start by doing a drawing. Everything from Roy came from the sketch in the morning he made at his drafting table or the cartoon he might do at night. I know he and Dorothy would watch TV, and he had sketch pads and he would churn out ... ideas. Then he would put them up and turn it into a drawing. Every painting started off with a cartoon, every sculpture started off with a cartoon, and got revised, enlarged, and continued down the process.”

The sketches and drawings present the creative genesis in the pure and personal hand and spirit of the artist. According to its curator, one half of the exhibition’s works are “inside” depictions, suggesting an interior or a studio. The other works set figures and things

“outside,” in fictive landscape. The exhibition includes one sequence with a finished painting, *Interior with Nude Leaving*, allowing viewers to see the completed process, which Cowart describes as one “the *grand finales* – a completed painting – in its almost unimaginable and colorful large scale and high, technically brilliant finish.”

I like to do the drawings for the paintings, where I begin to organize the material and get the idea for the material.... That's always pleasurable. Redrawing it when it's on the canvas is something I like to do. When I project it, I try to draw it again, trying not to copy the projection.... I redraw the position of each line. I know approximately where it's going to be. Then I redo that. I semi-erase the whole thing, and I draw it again. — Lichtenstein

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The Katonah Museum of Art is located at 134 Jay Street in Katonah, NY. 914-232-9555. www.katonahmuseum.org

Photo credits

Collage for Still Life with Reclining Nude, 1997

Painted and printed paper on board

40 1/8 x 60 1/4

Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Katonah Museum of Art, through innovative exhibition and education programs, promotes the understanding and enjoyment of the arts for visitors of all ages. The Museum presents diverse exhibitions that explore ideas about art, culture and society.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Katonah Museum of Art is located at 134 Jay Street (Route 22), Katonah, NY 10536. 914-232-9555. www.katonahmuseum.org

Directions

By Train: From Grand Central Terminal (Harlem Division of Metro North): The Katonah Museum of Art is located 1/2 mile east of the Katonah railroad station. Taxi service is available.

By Car: Take Exit 6 off Interstate 684. Go east on Route 35. Take the first right onto Route 22 south. The Museum is located 1/4 mile on the left.

Museum Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm, Sunday 12 to 5pm, Closed Mondays

Admission: 10 am – 12 Noon: free; 12 – 5 pm: admission \$5, \$3 for seniors and students; Members and children under 12 free

Free Docent-Led Guided Tours: Tuesday through Saturday, 2:30 pm

Tours are free with admission to the Museum

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