

THE PACE GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

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Happenings: New York, 1958–1963

534 West 25th Street, New York

February 10 – March 17, 2012

An opening reception will be held Thursday, February 9, from 6–8 p.m.



NEW YORK, January 11, 2012—The Pace Gallery is pleased to present *Happenings: New York, 1958–1963*, the first exhibition to document the origins and historical development of the transient, yet pivotal, “Happenings” movement from its inception in 1958 through 1963, when its originators abandoned or moved beyond it. The experimental performances, which began in Provincetown and unfolded in New York City in a number of alternative exhibition spaces and galleries, forever changed the definition of art and the possibilities for what it could be. **The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated book (304 pages, hardcover) published by The Monacelli Press and authored by Milly Glimcher.**

Happenings: New York, 1958–1963 will capture more than thirty of the original Happenings and the contributions of the main participants—**Jim Dine, Simone Forti, Red Grooms, Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, Lucas Samaras, Carolee Schneemann, and Robert Whitman.** The exhibition will bring together for the first time more than 300 photographs by five photographers who witnessed and documented the performances, including many photos that have never before been seen publicly. Rare film footage and original ephemera related to the Happenings’ production, including outlines, sketches, scripts, press releases, announcements and posters, will also be on view.

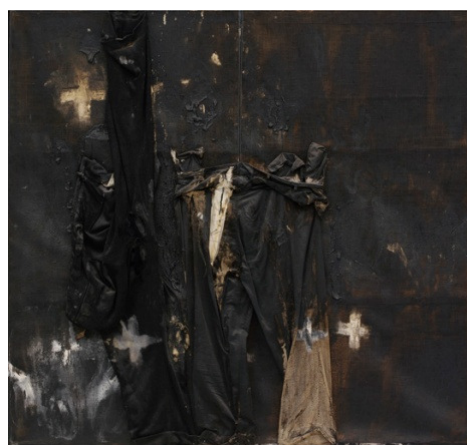
The exhibition will also feature artworks created during and around the performances, including **Red Grooms's** vibrant *Painting from "A Play Called Fire."* The painting, on loan from the Greenville County Museum



Red Grooms, *Painting from "A Play Called Fire"*, 1958, collection of Greenville Country Museum of Art, purchase from the Arthur and Holly Magill Fund.

of Art, was both the centerpiece and product of Grooms's first performance in Provincetown in 1958. The exhibition will also feature an **untitled installation on muslin, painted by Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns during 18 Happenings in 6 Parts** in 1959—the performance conceived by Allan Kaprow that forever changed the course of art history by moving art off of the wall and into life, involving the participation of the audience and incorporating sound, smell, poetry, music, and lights.

Other highlights of *Happenings: New York, 1958–1963* include **Jim Dine's Car Crash, 1959–60**, a dark oil and mixed-media painting on burlap with crosses, exhibited during *Car Crash* (performed at Reuben Gallery, November 1–6, 1960), and **The Valiant Red Car, 1960, on loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum**, the painting that hung in the lobby of the gallery during the same performance. **Claes Oldenburg's muslin sculpture *Freighter and Sailboat, 1962, on loan from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum***, used in Oldenburg's *Store Days II* (performed at Ray Gun Manufacturing Company, March 2–3, 1962), will also be on view. **Carolee Schneemann's *Quarry Transposed, 1960***, a wall relief from which her performance, *Newspaper Event* (Judson Dance Theater, January 29, 1963), evolved, is also included in the exhibition.



Jim Dine, *Car Crash*, 1959-60, oil and mixed media on burlap, 60 x 64"

In describing the Happenings, art historian Milly Glimcher writes: *This vital series of performances was part of a worldwide reappraisal of art and the role of the artist within accepted art practice. The Happenings artists personified the collapse of the hegemony of painting and sculpture as they introduced elements from daily life and popular culture into environments and performances. It is indisputable that between 1958 and 1963 these events transformed art, the perception of art, and its reception by the public, which itself had been transformed by these actions. As ground-breaking as the Abstract Expressionists had been, they remained within the historic traditions of painting and sculpture. The Happenings artists, each in his or her own way, destroyed the boundaries between art and life, as Rauschenberg aptly expressed it.*

Happenings: New York, 1958–1963 will be arranged predominantly chronologically, enabling the viewer to understand the movement as it unfolded through time. **The exhibition will also premiere Robert Whitman's *Inside Out, a five-film installation piece (1963–2009)***, created as Whitman moved beyond his initial performances. In 1963, Whitman, using 16 mm black and white film, captured Suzanne De Maria, Simone Forti, John Vaccaro and Larry Rutter individually as they sat around a table in conversation with one another, as well as

another shot of the table from above. The films were to be projected simultaneously in one room—one on each wall, and the bird's-eye view on the ceiling. In 2009, Whitman revisited the unrealized project, adding three sound loops derived from interviews with the three living participants, and a fourth derived from Vaccaro's comments on Rutter, who passed away several years ago. The four sound bites and films will loop continuously, none in sync with another.

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For more information about ***Happenings: New York, 1958–1963***, please contact the Public Relations department of The Pace Gallery at 212.421.8987. For general inquiries, please email info2@thepacegallery.com; for reproduction requests, email reprorequest@thepacegallery.com.

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Images:

Above: Claes Oldenburg's *Circus: Ironworks/Fotodeath*, performed at the Reuben Gallery, February 21-26, 1961. Cast photo: Edgar Blakeney, Max Baker, Tom Wesselmann, Claes Oldenburg, Henry Geldzahler, Clifford Smith (seated, left to right); Gloria Graves, Carl Lehmann-Haupt, Olga Adorno, Pat Oldenburg, Marilyn Jaffee, Judy Tersch, Claire Wesselmann, Chippy McClellan, Lucas Samaras (standing, left to right). © Robert R. McElroy/Licensed by VAGA, New York, New York.

Front page (from left): Jim Dine (center) in Allan Kaprow's *The Big Laugh*, performed at the Reuben Gallery, January 8–11, 1960 © Fred W. McDarrah / Premium Archive / Getty Images; Pat Muschinski and Claes Oldenburg in Oldenburg's *Snapshots from the City*, performed during *Ray Gun Spex* at Judson Church, February 29, March 1-2, 1960 © Martha Holmes / TIME & LIFE Images / Getty images © Claes Oldenburg.