

## Robert Whitman

61

510 West 25th Street, New York  
October 26 – December 21, 2018

Opening Reception:  
Thursday, October 25, 6 – 8 PM



New York—Pace Gallery is pleased to present a major survey exhibition of pioneering artist Robert Whitman. Encompassing works on paper, early films, sculptures, laser projections, and mixed-media and video installations, the exhibition spans over six decades of Whitman's innovative career, which has consistently pushed the boundaries of contemporary art. Since his emergence as part of New York's downtown art scene in the late 1950s alongside artists such as Lucas Samaras, Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine, Whitman has continually engaged new technologies and challenged traditional genre conventions. *Robert Whitman: 61* will be on view October 26 through December 21, 2018 at 510 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, with an opening reception for the artist taking place on Thursday, October 25, from 6 – 8 PM.

On the occasion of the exhibition, Whitman will present a new work, *Seoul – New York: Kids Exchange (Local Report)*, at CultureHub on Saturday, December 1 at 4 and 7 PM. The screenings will be free and open to the public, and additional [details are available here](#). Playing on two screens, the work incorporates audio and visual footage of children in Seoul and children in New York reporting on their local surroundings. Pace will also publish a full-color catalogue, featuring a new essay by writer and documentary filmmaker Adam Harrison Levy.

Drawing together over 30 works from 1957 through 2018, the survey exhibition highlights a range of pivotal moments throughout Whitman's career and underscores his ever-evolving and experimental approach to art-making. Beginning with a selection of the artist's earliest works on paper from the late 1950s, *61* also includes his first sculptural installation—*Untitled* (1957), an over 10 ½ - foot long thread hanging from the ceiling—and continues through to selections from his most recent series *Soundies* (2015)—audiovisual works that feature a sonically evocative still image, such as a burning match or a diving board, complemented with an audio recording of the associative sound.

Whitman created some of the first, and most significant, mixed-media performance works of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and this exhibition features three of the artist's first four Cinema Pieces made in 1963-64, including *Window* (1963), *Shower* (1964), and *Dressing Table* (1964 and 2018). In each transformational work, an everyday action is depicted by fusing a filmed image of that action with the physical object with which it is associated—in *Shower*, a film of a woman taking a shower of clear and red-colored water is projected in a continuous loop onto a curtain, behind which various liquids cascade inside a metal shower stall.

Earlier this year, Whitman revisited *Dressing Table* to create a new version specifically for this exhibition, remarkably using the same performer over five decades after he created the original work. The 1964 *Dressing Table* includes a table cluttered with cosmetics and a mirror, which works as a secondary projection device for the film that pictures a woman, Susanna Wilson (de Maria), carefully applying brightly colored makeup and removing it with skin cream. In the new work, Whitman has added a second, identical table and mirror, and created a second film that again shows Wilson applying various makeups and face-creams. The two tables face one another at an angle, fostering the sense of a conversation or exchange taking place over 54 years. Throughout the nearly 40-minute-films, there are moments of striking similarities in mannerism and expression, juxtaposed with the stark distinctions of time.

A founder of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in 1966 with Robert Rauschenberg and leading engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer, Whitman was one of the earliest artists to think critically about the integration of new technologies not only in his practice but across the field of contemporary art. Throughout the late 1960s, E.A.T. established regional chapters across the U.S. designed to catalyze and nurture collaborations between artists and engineers. A highlight of 61 is the ambitious multiscreen video and sound installation *Local Report* (2005), a version of which was most recently presented in an exhibition dedicated to E.A.T. on view this past summer in Seoul, Korea at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.

In a foreshadowing of social media's ubiquity, *Local Report* encompasses performances in which participants were asked to use video cell phones, in their infancy in 2005, to transmit images and sounds from their communities. The performances were streamed live to the project's website, and now comprise the video and sound components of the installation. *Local Report* grew from an earlier work *News* (1972), in which Whitman gave coins to people in Manhattan and sent them to payphones all over the city to make a report of what they saw from each phone, which were broadcast live on local radio. As payphones gave away to cell phones and radio gave way to the Internet, Whitman has embraced these new tools and infused them within his practice – one grounded in exploring the elusiveness of perception and always challenging our ways of looking.

**Robert Whitman** (b. 1935, New York) was a leading figure in New York's downtown art scene and the happenings movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and is recognized as a pioneer of performance art and multimedia

installation. With his performance-based work and his involvement in Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), Whitman aspires to transform and transcend the limitations of images by emphasizing their spatial, temporal, and dimensional qualities. His interests are focused not in the content of images but in what those images can communicate and the ways in which viewers can experience and relate to them. His use of technology and media functions as a means to probe larger issues of looking.

Whitman has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions held at institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1968); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1968); The Jewish Museum, New York (1968); and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1973). He has composed and produced over forty performance works, nine of which, spanning from 1976 to 1983, were created in conjunction with Dia Art Foundation. His theatre works have been presented at the New York Film Festival (1966); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston (1974); The Kitchen, New York (1974, 1990); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1974); Dia Center for the Arts, New York (1976, 2003); Dia:Beacon (2011); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1982); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1987); Philadelphia Museum of Art (1987, 1989); and MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1990), among other venues.

Whitman's work is held in numerous collections in the United States and abroad, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Dia Art Foundation, New York; The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Robert Whitman has been represented by Pace since 1995. Solo exhibitions of his work at the gallery include *Dark* (1967), *Backtrack* (1995), *Great Lakes* (1997), *Shading* (2004), *Sun* (2007), *Turning* (2007), and *Soundies* (2015).

**Pace** is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has ten locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; two in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul. Pace will open a new flagship gallery in New York, anticipated for completion in fall 2019. In 2016, Pace joined with Futurecity to launch Future\ Pace—an international cultural partnership innovating multidisciplinary projects for art in the public realm.

Image: Robert Whitman, *Local Report*, 2005, digital video projections with sound, each projection: 66" x 79" (167.6 cm x 200.7 cm); installation dimensions variable. Edition of 4. © Robert Whitman, courtesy Pace Gallery.

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