

## 12 Chairs

May 9<sup>th</sup> - June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

*Chairs are for company. A good chair is like a good friend - steady, comfortable, and reliable. Chairs validate. They can endow one with divine power. Empty chairs are very forlorn. We can see them on porches and verandas. Chairs are class-conscious. Of course \*musical chairs is a game in which everyone finds a home (chair) except one. When people want to describe futile actions in a crisis they sometimes say "It was like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic." Chairs at AA meetings are strictly functional. Maybe in Malibu or Beverly Hills they're comfortable but who knows?*

- Ross Vachon, poet

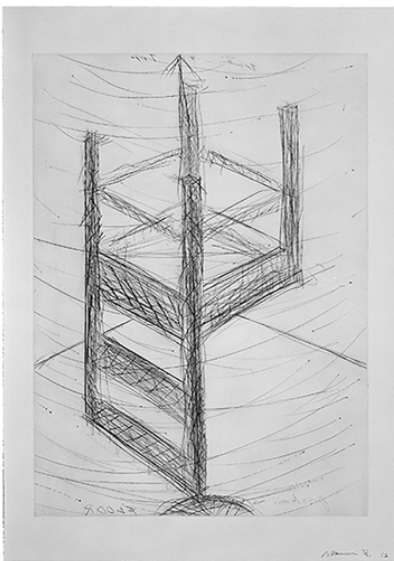
Jim Kempner Fine Art is pleased to announce *12 Chairs*, a group exhibition of prints, paintings, and works on paper by contemporary and modern masters. The exhibition will highlight the interpretation of the chair as an object of visual study and a subject of conceptual interest amongst a variety of artists across different mediums, throughout time. The exhibition will be on view from May 9<sup>th</sup> through June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. An opening reception for the show will be held Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm.

The use of the chair in modern and contemporary art history has often taken a literal and figurative back seat to the human forms under which it exists. In this context, the chair would serve the function of prop or object of lesser importance in the visual and conceptual field. *12 Chairs* instead presents a selection of work by modern and contemporary masters who celebrate the chair itself and have thus allowed it to function as the subject and the subject matter. This exhibition

includes work by Louise Bourgeois, Richard Diebenkorn, Carole Freeman, Frank Gehry, Jerry Mischak, Elizabeth Murray, Bruce Nauman, Ken Price, Dan Rizzie, Tom Slaughter, Constance Culpepper, and Jim Watt.

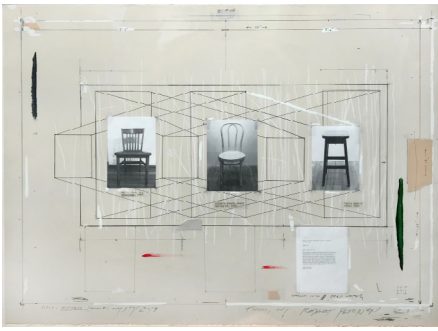


Louise Bourgeois. *Twosome*, 2005. Drypoint and softground with chine collé. 15 x 17". Edition 25.



Bruce Nauman. *Suspended Chair*, 1985. Drypoint. 39 1/4 x 28". Edition 31.

One of the earliest works on display is Bruce Nauman's *Suspended Chair* from 1985. The piece exhibits the artist's play on negative and positive space by suspending and inverting the chair in space. In doing so, the chair has been successfully rendered defunct and incapable of performing its original function. This inversion prompts the viewer to question the space in and around the object, drawing attention to Nauman's angular composition, use of line, and play on compositional space. Nauman's take on the chair parallels his well-known sculpture, *A cast of the space under my chair*, created almost two decades prior in 1965-68 and is one that takes the opportunity to visualize the chair as an object with artistic value in its form rather than relegate it exclusively to its utilitarian usage. These are just two examples of how Nauman's long standing use of the chair has been a means to experiment and express his conceptual art.



Robert Petersen. *Witness (Study 1)*, 2019.  
Collage and mixed media on paper.  
22 1/2 x 29 3/4".

In a similar manner, Louise Bourgeois' etching, *Twosome* (2005), exhibits the artist's long-standing relationship to the chair as subject and makes use of duality and seriality to illustrate the chair as an object removed from its surroundings. Frank Gehry's *Chair 2* (2007), Tom Slaughter's *Adirondak Chair* (1996), and Dan Rizzie's *Empty Chair* (2015) also place the chair in empty space, removed from its original context, which draws focus to their stylized approach to rendering the object. Specific to Bourgeois, however, is her isolation of the chair to encourage the viewer to consider the object as a self-portrait. *Twosome* is just one of many prints in which Bourgeois embraces the concept of mirroring, creating two chairs that formally reflect one another and psychologically reflect Bourgeois herself.

The show also features work by Jim Watt, Robert Petersen, Constance Culpepper, Jerry Mischak, and Carole Freeman. Although varying in medium, size, and composition, each of the works holistically draws attention to the importance of considering the chair within a particular setting. Of notable interest is Petersen's work on paper, *Witness* (2019), which highlights three chairs with personal meaning to the artist from different art histories: Andy Warhol's studio stool, Petersen's wife, artist Cinda Sparling, chair from the 1980s, and Robert Rauschenberg's chair that was photographed and depicted in his iconic, interactive installation *Soundings* from the 1960s. To accompany the work, all three physical chairs will be on view throughout the exhibition, drawing our attention to the rapport between the three-dimensional object and its two-dimensional reproductions.

The addition of Mischak's *Don't Put Your Shoes on the Table* from 2019, which presents the viewer with a dynamic interior composition as well as an arresting use of color. By placing the chair amongst other objects in the scene, all of which are visually and perspectively warped, the viewer is given the opportunity to reassess the chair as a traditional or stable object. Similarly, Jim Watt's abstraction and use of color alters the functional context within which the chair is normally found by altering our sense of the background and foreground. As the most recent and contemporary works on display, these artists portray the timelessness of the chair as an object of visual study.

For a full list of works in the exhibition and more information, please contact Director Sarah Browne at [sarah@jimkempner.com](mailto:sarah@jimkempner.com).



Jerry Mischak. *Don't Put Your Shoes on the Table*, 2019.  
Acrylic on canvas. 40 x 30".