

PEDER LUND

Richard Serra – Drawings

18 February – 22 April 2017

Peder Lund is delighted to present an exhibition of drawings by one of the great artists of our time, Richard Serra (1938-). Serra's large-scale steel sculptures have made him a crucial figure in contemporary art. At the same time, the artist has had a parallel, fully autonomous drawing practice; equally process oriented as the sculptures, but based on its own established criteria. By creating tension within the conventions of drawing and pushing the parameters of the language used to understand the practice, Serra has significantly contributed to shaping the field of drawing after modernism by using new techniques, monumental scale and by meticulously creating relationships with the drawings' surrounding space. The exhibition *Richard Serra – Drawings* at Peder Lund features nine works, spanning 32 years of Serra's artistic production, bringing together key work series that demonstrate the ever-evolving ideas and methods in the artist's practice.

Serra has always drawn: he was accepted to the painting department at Yale University School of Art and Architecture based on twelve contour drawings (1964-65), and while on a postgraduate travel fellowship in Paris, he sketched daily at Constantin Brancusi's studio, recreated in Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville. Settling in New York City in 1966, he worked to get away from anecdotal drawing, and drawing that was representational of his sculptures, focusing instead on the nature of space. A major breakthrough occurred in 1974, when the artist began making wall-size abstractions titled *Installation Drawings*. These works dealt with the delineation of architecture, and the definition of a space within architecture that was different than the intended architectural space itself. From this point on, with the aid of his drawings, Serra began to define experienced space in relation to contained architectural space.

Drawing to Serra is a matter of mark-making; to make a mark on a piece of paper and extend and redefine what that problem can be. He is not concerned with subjective gestures or narrative references, and his intention is not to create an emotional response in the viewer. Instead, Serra redraws the space and place the viewer is in, as succinctly as he can, with the simplest means possible.

Serra's drawings are characterised by the density of the material and the compact work process. He uses black paintstick – an oil-based crayon – to build stark, tightly layered forms. Warming or melting the material, he applies the paintstick either directly onto the paper with large sweeps of his arm, or he uses a window screen as an intermediary surface through which he presses the pigment. In recent drawings, such as the *Solids* series (2007-08), of which *Solid #23* is on view (2008), the melted paintstick is poured onto a hard surface on the floor. Sometimes a sheet of window screen is placed on top of the liquid paintstick and then the paper is laid on top of the pigment. The paintstick is transferred to the sheet by pressing a hard marking tool onto the back of the paper. The resulting forms impact the viewer's sense of mass and gravity, making for an experience that is equally spatial, tactile, and visual, by drawing attention to the viewer's own corporeality.

On view at Peder Lund is the monumental work *Blanchot* (2009) from the series *Greenpoint Rounds*, featuring big, black circles on the surface of heavy paper. Each work in the series was given the name of a writer: *Blanchot* is derived from the French writer, philosopher, and literary theorist Maurice Blanchot (1907-2003), who influenced the post-structuralist philosophers. The work evokes Serra's infamous series *Rounds* (1996-97) and *out-of-rounds* (1999-2000). Also on view will be work from the recent series *Ramble Drawings*, a mixture of Litho crayon, black pastel and powder applied to handmade paper, as well as three earlier drawings, all carefully selected by the artist.

Richard Serra was born in San Francisco in 1938. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his artistic achievements: he is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has received honorary doctorates from Yale University and others. In 2008, he was named a commander of the order of Arts and Letters of the French Academy and was decorated with the order of the Arts and Letters of Spain. Serra has had major exhibitions across the world, and his drawings have in recent years been the subject of exhibitions at institutions including the Menil Collection, Houston; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (*Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective*, 2011-12), as well as Kunsthau Bregenz (*Richard Serra Drawings: Work Comes Out of Work*, 2008). Serra's work is included in the world's most prestigious institutional collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Dia Art Foundation, Beacon; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; LACMA, Los Angeles; The Broad, Los Angeles; Tate Modern, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, among many others.