

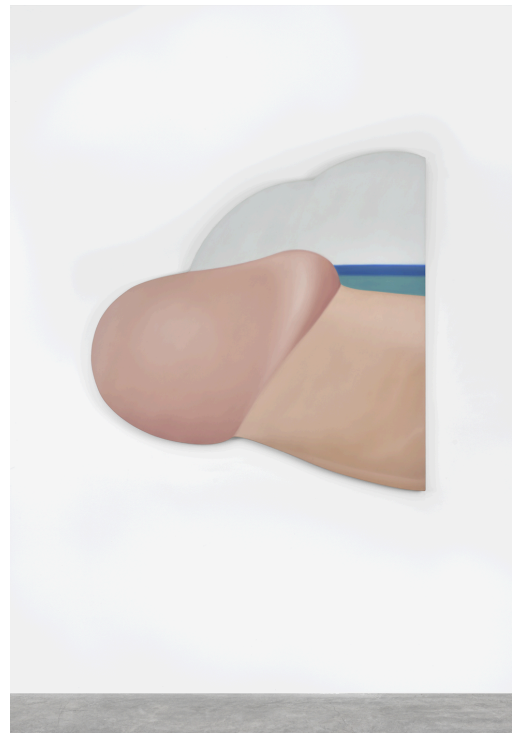
ALMINE RECH

Tom Wesselmann

Up Close

Almine Rech, London

5 March - 12 April 2025



"I came in closer and closer on the nude and kept coming in so close that finally I did the whole tit or the whole face or whatever."

Tom Wesselmann, Interview by Irving Sandler, 1984, Archives of American Art

Almine Rech will present a solo exhibition by Tom Wesselmann in March 2025. Emerging as a pivotal figure in the American Pop Art movement of the 1960s, Wesselmann set aside abstract expressionism to embrace classical representations. His art, particularly in nudes, still lifes, and landscapes, carved out a unique niche with its integration of collage elements and assemblages. These works often included everyday objects and advertising materials, reflecting his ambition to create imagery as impactful as the abstract expressionism he revered.

Renowned for his Great American Nude series, this exhibition at Almine Rech, London, will focus on the artist's Penis works, predominantly of the 1970s, which are marked by bold forms and vibrant colours. In Wesselmann's own words, writing under his nom de plume Slim Stealingworth, in 1980: "Wesselmann introduced the penis into his [body parts] series in 1967. He had intended to use it in his paintings for a long time—it was to him an incredibly vivid, even electrifying, image. In these works he is no longer the viewer but the subject, and they inevitably take on a bit of exhibitionism. In most of these works the erect penis is horizontal, so that it rather literally takes the place of the reclining nude as subject. In general, the reverberations between the body part and still life element are primarily visual and are generally innocuous in other respects. In his consideration of what still life objects to include, Wesselmann in 1967, was largely guided by what seemed most appropriate next to a bed and also what seemed most visually concrete and interesting to him. *Bedroom Painting #20* is an incredibly compressed composition, a perfect example of one of his primary interests at this point".

Exploring Wesselmann's long-standing fascination with composition and scale, the exhibition at Almine Rech, London, presents paintings and preparatory sketches featuring a cast of elements that interested him: mouths, tongues, hands and feet appear in seascapes and bedrooms, often in tension with still life elements chosen intuitively, such as an ashtray with cigarette, light switch, vase of flowers, telephone, radio, a portrait in a frame, tissue box, orange, clock, and lotion bottle.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Press contact

Isabel Davies | isabel@sam-talbot.com

Tom Wesselman

Tom Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 23, 1931. He attended Hiram College in Ohio from 1949 to 1951 before entering the University of Cincinnati. In 1953, his studies were interrupted by a two year enlistment in the army, during which time he began drawing cartoons. He returned to the university in 1954 and received a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1956. During this time, he decided to pursue a career in cartooning and so enrolled at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. After graduation he moved to New York City, where he was accepted into the Cooper Union and where his focus shifted dramatically to fine art. He received his diploma in 1959. Wesselmann's work was shown in numerous institutional exhibitions, including retrospectives at institutions like the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, affirming his status as a significant figure in contemporary art.

Almine Rech

Almine Rech opened her first gallery in Paris in November 1989. The gallery is known for its representation of minimal, perceptual, and conceptual artists such as James Turrell, John McCracken, and Joseph Kosuth, occupying spaces in Paris, Brussels, London, New York, Shanghai and recent Gstaad and Monaco locations. Throughout the years, Almine Rech has expanded, opening new locations throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, Asia, and the United States. In addition to preserving long-standing relationships with renowned artists such as Joseph Kosuth, James Turrell, and De Wain Valentine, Almine Rech works with emerging artists like Farah Atassi, Oliver Beer, Andrea Marie Breiling, Genieve Figgis, Daniel Gibson, Nathaniel Mary Quinn, George Rouy, Vaughn Spann, Emma Stern, Claire Tabouret, Genesis Tramaine, Amanda Wall, Chloe Wise, and Huang Yuxing alongside established artists and estates, such as John M Armleder, Karel Appel, Alexander Calder, Ha Chong-Hyun, Günther Förg, Jeff Koons, Jannis Kounellis, Pablo Picasso, Antoni Tàpies, Mai-Thu, Richard Prince, Tom Wesselmann, and Kim Tschang-Yeul. As well as exhibitions hosted in the various gallery locations, Almine Rech participates in numerous art fairs including Art Basel, TEFAF, Paris+, and Frieze.