

Jene Highstein: Space and Place



March 19th, 2018 – June 31th, 2018

Jean-Paul Najjar Foundation
45 Alserkal Avenue

www.jpnajarfoundation.com
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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, DUBAI - The Jean-Paul Najjar Foundation (JPNF) is proud to present *Jene Highstein: Space and Place* a solo exhibition showcasing the artist's seminal sculptures as well as works on paper from the 1970s through the 1990s.

A key figure of sculptural abstraction, Highstein used bronze, concrete, steel and wood to create primal and organic forms. Highstein's sculptural forms experienced constant shifts in size. He was adept at creating artworks of immense and yet intimate scale. Both his expansive site-specific works and more traditional sculptures remain idiosyncratic. The irregularities, curves and discolorations of Highstein's sculptures are a by-product of the process and passing of time, both of which are fully embraced by the artist. Thus, the sculptures retain a biomorphic feel: "they are not abstracted from nature, but re-natured abstractions."¹

Highstein's quasi-manufactured sculptures create a dialogue between raw materials and nature, while also stressing the importance of the object's presence and surrounding space. Throughout his artistic career, Highstein investigated the relationship of sculpture to its surroundings and its impact on the viewer's perception of space.

The solidity of Highstein's sculptures complements the delicacy of his works on paper. His drawings of intense bone black pigment, charcoal and Chinese ink share the same processes as his sculptures. A frame is constructed through graphite and then covered with pigment, like the trowelling of cement over a steel frame. Highstein's drawings exist independently of his sculptural mounds, spheres and totems.

¹ Jenifer P. Borum, *Jene Highstein: Wave Hill*, ArtForum (October 1989)



The extensive archival component of the exhibition similarly reveals Highstein's commitment to the experiential. With documentary photographs and film of his work this exhibition journeys into Highstein's creative processes and the deep friendship that bound him to the collector and patron Jean-Paul Najjar.

Core to the Jean-Paul Najjar Foundation's mission to engage the community, the exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive public and educational program and a digital catalogue.

EDITORS NOTES

Jene Highstein Biography

Jene Highstein was born in 1942 in Baltimore. He earned a BA in philosophy from the University of Maryland in 1963, completed postgraduate work in philosophy at the University of Chicago, and committed himself to art practice in 1966. He then went on to study drawing at the New York Studio School before earning a Post Graduate Diploma from the Royal Academy Schools, London, in 1970.

Highstein has received several awards, including four National Endowment for the Arts grants, a John Simon Guggenheim Award, and a St. Gaudens Memorial Prize. His public sculptures are installed at sites including the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Carnegie Bank collection, Stockholm; and the Villa e Collezione Panza Villa Litta, Varese, Italy; and he has had solo exhibitions at the Hartford Art Center, West Hartford, Connecticut (2000); Art Museum of Memphis (2001); and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Queens, New York (2003), among others. In 1998, he produced a theater production, Flatland, for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, and in 2004 he collaborated with the architect Steven Holl on an ice structure for the Snow Show in Finnish Lapland. Highstein passed on April 27, 2013 in Salem, New York.

About the JPNF

The Jean-Paul Najjar Foundation for Contemporary Art is a non-profit ICOM registered private museum, gathering abstract European and American art from the 1960s through today. The JPNF is also home to a remarkable archive tracing forty years of artist-collector exchanges. Education is central to the museum's mission. We are committed to presenting an educational program that promotes a spirit of discovery and inquiry that engages our diverse communities. The JPNF is designed by Mario Jossa, of Marcel Breuer and Associates, and is presented in partnership with Alserkal Avenue in Dubai.

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JPNF is open Sunday – Saturday, 11AM – 6PM