ALMINE RECH

George Condo
Life is Worth Living

Oct 14 — Nov 18, 2017 | Paris

Almine Rech Gallery Paris is pleased to present "Life is Worth Living", George Condo's first solo exhibition with the gallery, from October 14 through to November 18, 2017. This will be the artist's first major showing in Paris since his sensational salon installation at the Grand Palais for the exhibition Picasso.mania in 2015.

In his new exhibition "Life is Worth Living", a title taken from an old note he once sent to his long-time friend Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, George Condo will exhibit works that include paintings and sculpture he made while living in Paris in the late '80s and early '90s in conversation with his most recent works made in the past year. During this earlier period in his career Condo's paintings experimented with combining a variety of media and painterly styles simultaneously, such as the use of oil and collage on canvas with very delicate linear forms as seen in *Les Quatre Femmes* (1989, oil and collage on canvas, 200 x 250 cm). Works such as *The Headless Harlequin* (1989, oil on canvas, 220 x 189.8 cm) and *When the Elephant Says No...* (1986, oil on canvas, 206 x 318.2 cm) exemplify Condo's use of drawing and painting together in a structurally destructive method of working that the artist has employed throughout much of his career to the present day.

As Felix Guattari wrote of Condo's Parisian paintings in 1990, "This structural deconstruction operates by means of two processes: an inversion of statements and a saturation of the canvas."

The new works on view at Almine Rech Gallery, which continue in the vein of painterly exploration highlighted by Guattari, include two large format triptych paintings depicting in dense all-over figurative abstraction the chaos and illusion of the state of political affairs in contemporary America, bringing into focus the mad, unmitigated paranoia fiercely enveloping the world. Paintings such as *The Investigation* (2017, oil and pigment stick on linen, 254 x 609.6 cm, triptych) and *Collusion* (2017, oil and pigment stick on linen, 208.3 x 609.6 cm, triptych) take on the subjects of media and political obsession. They are painted in an abstracted gestural manner that captures the speed at which the news is changing and the artist's mind is working, echoing the strange irreality of the fake news phenomena.

Condo predicted this shift in global media perception back in the late '80s in his early treatise on art which he called "Artificial Realism", a term that applied then to art and its evolution but has now become the essence of our daily confusion over what is real and what isn't. *The Last Man Standing* (2017, oil, graphite and pigment stick on linen, 203.2 x 190.5 cm) depicts what Condo refers to as a "reporter" set against a fiery red background, smoking a cigarette and waiting to get the scoop that will most likely never come. *Inside the West Wing* (2017, oil and graphite on linen, 198.1 x 233.7 cm) is an orgy-like composition of decadence and betrayal, and of the imaginary network of secret activities no one is allowed to witness but everyone can imagine all too well. A dark and frightening painting, *Back Channel* (2016-17, oil, pigment stick and silver metallic paint on canvas, 213.4 x 208.3 cm) is fueled by the potentially paranoiac impact that the discovery of such scandalous proposals by news media figures has been ramping up in our collective imagination.

In 2016-2017 George Condo was the subject of *Confrontation*, the first ever large-scale exhibition of a contemporary artist at Museum Berggruen, Berlin. The exhibition featured works by George Condo from the early 1980s through today, selected and curated by Udo Kittelmann in collaboration with the artist, alongside works by classical modernist artists from the collection of Berlin's Nationalgalerie.

Mr. Condo's recent career-spanning survey of drawings *The Way I Think*, curated by Klaus Ottmann and exhibited at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. in the spring of 2017, will travel to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, opening November 9th and on view until February 4th, 2018.