

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Sculpture

20.10.2022 – 07.01.2023

Press kit

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Artist's quotes

“Everyone is so enamored with things they recognize, but the key purpose of art is to find out what you don't already know.”

“I'm still making sculptures in the way that I made the poems.”

“I like certain words together regardless of meaning, two words or three words that mean absolutely nothing, but they look good. [...] I began keeping lists of words that caught my eye, words that looked good, with a lot of p's and o's.”

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John Chamberlain in Paris, Galerie Karsten Greve, 2007. Photo : Michel Lunardelli

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Charles Olson

Maximus, to himself

I have had to learn the simplest things
last. Which made for difficulties.
Even at sea I was slow, to get the hand out, or to cross
a wet deck.

 The sea was not, finally, my trade.
But even my trade, at it, I stood estranged
from that which was most familiar. Was delayed,
and not content with the man's argument
that such postponement
is now the nature of
obedience,

 that we are all late
 in a slow time,
 that we grow up many
 And the single
 is not easily
 known

Charles Olson, *Maximus, to himself*, 1983 from Charles Olson,
The Maximus Poems, University of California Press, 1983.
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John Chamberlain in Paris, Galerie Karsten Greve, 2007. Photo : Michel Lunardelli

Biography

John Chamberlain was born in Rochester, Indiana, in 1927. At the age of 16, he enlisted in the US Navy and served on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific and the Mediterranean, which he recalled as being fundamental to his perception of space, the scale of things and perspective. In 1955, he studied and taught sculpture at Black Mountain College after a brief stint at the Art Institute of Chicago, the city of his youth. Black Mountain College was then one of the most active centres of the artistic post-war avant-garde in the United States. Against that backdrop, Chamberlain had an intense reaction to the emergence of the American poetry of his contemporaries, which was based on an openness of construction and a lack of prior rules. Close to the work of the Action painters and abstract expressionists, he was influenced by the work of David Smith, Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline.

Chamberlain achieved great prominence from the end of the 1950s. In 1961, he participated in the major exhibition *The Art of Assemblage* held by William C. Seitz at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, then in the São Paulo Biennial that same year. He represented the US Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1964. The Guggenheim Museum in New York devoted two retrospectives to him – the first one in 1971, and then another titled *Choices* in 2012. In 1991, he participated in major exhibitions at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden and, in 1996, at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. His works can be found in some of the most notorious collections such as those of MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Menil Collection in Houston, the Kunst Museum Winterthur in Switzerland, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Tate Gallery in London. His pieces are also featured in permanent exhibitions at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, and the Dia Beacon Museum in New York, which has devoted more than 100 exhibitions to him.

Galerie Karsten Greve began its collaboration with John Chamberlain at the beginning of the 1970s. He died in New York in 2011.

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John Chamberlain

Opera Chocolates

1994

Painted and chromed steel

122,9 x 134,6 x 105,4 cm / 48 1/2 x 53 x 41 1/2 in

JC/S 31

**Photo: Galerie Karsten Greve
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.**

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JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Sculpture

20.10.2022 – 07.01.2023

Galerie Karsten Greve is delighted to present *Sculpture*, a new exhibition devoted to the work of the American artist John Chamberlain. The selected works span 40 years of his artistic creation, from 1967 to 2007. The exhibition thus perpetuates the long artistic collaboration between John Chamberlain and Karsten Greve, which dates back to the beginning of the 1970s.

John Chamberlain was one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, a master of metal-folding and -transformation and an exceptional colourist. The post-war *zeitgeist* (spirit of the time) propelled artists to experiment and seek new freedoms, liberating themselves from past dogmas. The abstract expressionist movement emerged in New York in the interwar period and blossomed fully after the Victory of 1945. John Chamberlain espoused the movement, in which plastic language was considered self-sufficient through a new relationship to gesture.

Quite rapidly, John Chamberlain chose his material: steel, which he often scavenged and selected from abandoned cars. He would reshape it endlessly. The medium became an “*arena in which to act*”, to use Jackson Pollock’s expression. In a way, Chamberlain managed to seize that new form of pictorial expression and convey it in a sculptural shape – incidentally, it is often said that his sculptures are the counterparts of Willem de Kooning’s canvases, in a certain symbiosis between shape, gesture and colour.

From his first solo exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1960, John Chamberlain seduced a large number of collectors and artists with his perception of matter. They included Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd and Andy Warhol. Andy Warhol even acquired *Papagayo* (1967), one of John Chamberlain’s largest galvanised-steel sculptures, which was later exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1971 for the artist’s very first retrospective and on display here. *Papagayo* is characteristic of his work in the second half of the 1960s, when Chamberlain was experimenting by briefly choosing to forgo colour and give free reign to the shadows and lights on the surface of the metal in a minimalist bent. That interlude accentuated the density of the metal that became so malleable in the hands of the artist.

John Chamberlain proclaimed himself a three-dimensional collage artist, because he assembled the most varied parts in a new structure (while preserving the initial properties of the medium). That was the case with *Double Hooded Jim* (1974) and *Silver Plait* (1976), which distinguish themselves by the assemblage of several parts that come to form one single entity. His sculptures have no narrative; they shine with an inherent poetry on the sole basis of their shapes, demonstrating the importance of Chamberlain’s artistic choice in assembling and balancing the parts: “*Some seem to think that I work with found parts, but that isn’t the case. They are chosen, you see [...] there is a great deal of magic behind that choice*”. Neither the joints (welding) nor the use of colour or materials are, then, significant, except insofar as they test or (re)define shape. In a

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certain way, John Chamberlain invited viewers to discover the unknown he made from what already existed: “*They [people] weren’t curious about what they didn’t know. Probably the key activity in the occupation of art is to find out what you don’t know*”¹.

The idea of assemblage is central in all of John Chamberlain’s oeuvre, both in his working of metal and in his pictorial exercises. The series of works on paper *View from the Cockpit* (1976) shines with the intensity and pureness of the colours projected in a graphic whole – a nod to Robert Delaunay’s orphism. His rarely exhibited monotypes date back to the middle of the 1980s and showcase yet another different exercise, which could be sculpture not in volume, but on a two-dimensional support to which he applied colour through collage and assemblage.

A series of photographs is also to be displayed on the occasion of the *Sculpture* exhibition, completing the overview of the various aspects of the artist’s work. In 1977, John Chamberlain started experimenting with a Widelux camera. Its unique structure made the lens pivot on a panoramic horizontal arc to obtain distortive effects that would be impossible with traditional cameras. Chamberlain took the photographs as he swung the camera, as in *Downtown* (1989).

In 1984, John Chamberlain declared: “*I’m still making sculptures in the way that I made the poems*”. At Black Mountain College², where he studied and then taught in the 1950s, he came to know the poets Charles Olson and Robert Creeley, whose teachings played a fundamental role in his practice. According to Olson, “*the shape of a poem is crucial, or, in other words, its composition and its physical aspect. A poem must work with a sense of proprioception; it must be centred on bodily experience*” – an idea that Chamberlain applied both to his works and to the titles he bestowed upon them. Creeley, for his part, encouraged his students to consider words as entities, visual facts that had their own distinct properties. “*I like some words together, regardless of their meaning, two words or three words that don’t mean a thing, but that look pretty. [...] I’ve started to make lists of words I like, that are beautiful, with lots of ‘p’s and ‘o’s*”³, explained Chamberlain. He compiled words and letters for his titles to find the right fit between shape, colour and space⁴. *Opera Chocolates* (1994) is a perfect example of that harmonious visual adjustment between the ‘o’s, the ‘p’s and the ‘c’s, which mirror the shape of the sculpture. That exercise, which he devoted himself to his whole life, attests to the artist’s irony and great sense of humour.

Also in 1984, the theorist Hal Foster wrote that “*the space vacated by the old ‘sculpture’ category*” had given way to the new, underlining the importance given to both the medium and space, which transcended the traditional dogmas of the discipline. The *Sculpture* exhibition thus invites viewers to observe countless variations upon shapes and space masterfully wielded by one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century.

¹ *John Chamberlain: a catalogue raisonné of the sculpture 1954-1985*, Julie Sylvester, New York, Hudson Hill Press, MOCA Los Angeles, 1986, p.11.

² Black Mountain College, the most active and important experimental liberal arts college at the time, which welcomed the most influential personages of the twentieth century including the Albers couple, Cy Twombly and Walter Gropius.

³ Interview with Paul Gardner, “*Do Titles Really Matter?*” in *Art News* 91, n.2, Feb. 1992, p.95.

⁴ “*To find a good fit*”.

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John Chamberlain

Bloodydrivetrain

2007

Painted and chromed steel

99 x 144,8 x 116,8 cm / 39 x 57 x 46 in

DB # 0569

JC/S 17

Photo : Georges Poncet, Paris

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.

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John Chamberlain

Whimzee
2006

Painted and chromed steel
44,5 x 53,3 x 43,8 cm / 17 1/2 x 21 x 17 1/4 in

JC/S 14

Photo : Saša Fuis, Cologne
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.

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John Chamberlain

Newborn Fossile

2001

Painted and chromed steel

22,5 x 57,5 x 21,5 cm / 8 3/4 x 22 2/3 x 8 1/2 in

JC/S 65

**Photo: Galerie Karsten Greve
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.**

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John Chamberlain

Papagayo

1967

Galvanized steel

183 x 111,5 x 117 cm / 72 x 44 x 46 in

Photo : Saša Fuis, Cologne.

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.

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Biography

1927	Born in Rochester, Indiana, USA
1951-1952	Studies at The Art Institute of Chicago, USA
1955-1956	Studies at Black Mountain College in NC, meeting with Charles Olson, Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley
1957	First sculptures made from automobile parts steel First solo exhibition at Wells Street Gallery, Chicago, USA
1960	First solo exhibition in New York, at Martha Jackson Gallery
1963	Begins his first series of paintings using body paint and iron filings
1967	First sculptures in galvanized steel
1971	first retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum à New York
1977	Starts taking photographs with the Widelux camera
2000	Becomes member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
2006	Elected member of the National Academy of Design, New York
2011	Died in New York, USA

Selection of Awards

1993	Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Sculpture Center, Washington DC, USA
1997	National Arts Club Artists Award, New York, USA
1999	Award Distinction in Sculpture laureate, by the Sculpture Center, New York, USA

Selection of public collections

Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany
Städtisches Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach, Mönchengladbach, Germany
Tate Gallery, London, England
Museum moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria
IVAM Centre Julio González, Valence, Spain
Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, Italy
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland
Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Switzerland
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, USA
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, USA
American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., New York, NY, USA
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX, USA

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The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA, USA
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, USA
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, USA
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI, USA
Dia Art Foundation, New York, NY, USA
The Douglas Cramer Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Frederick R. Weisman Foundation of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
General Mills, Minneapolis, MI, USA
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA
International Business Machines, Armonk, NY, USA
John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL, USA
Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts, Louisville, KY, USA
Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation for Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, USA
The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX, USA
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, Governors State University, University Park, IL, USA
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C, USA
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, USA
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY, USA
Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL, USA
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, FL, USA
The Refco Collection, Chicago, IL, USA
Rivendell Collection, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, USA
The Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, MO, USA
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Southwestern Bell, Saint Louis, MO, USA
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, USA
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, USA
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA
Warner Brothers, Burbank, CA, USA
Washington University Gallery of Art, Saint Louis, MO, USA
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

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Selection of solo exhibitions

- 2022/23 *Sculpture*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris
- 2022 *John Chamberlain, Reclaimed*, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Suisse
- 2021/22 *John Chamberlain. Stance, Rhythm, Tilt*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2020 *Chamberlain in Paris*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris
- 2019 *Baby Tycoons*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY, USA
- 2018 *ENTIRELYFEARLESS*, Gagosian, London, UK
John Chamberlain. Bending Spaces, Städtische Museen Koblenz, Ludwig Museum in Deutscherrenhaus, Germany
- 2017 *John Chamberlain. Photographs*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris
John Chamberlain. Masks, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2016/17 *John Chamberlain. Poetic Form*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2016 *John Chamberlain. Skulptur & Fotografie*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
- 2015 *John Chamberlain*, Inverleigh House, Royal Botanic Garden, Edimbourg, Écosse
John Chamberlain. Skulpturen 1962 - 1982, Ein Saal für die Sammlung, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland
John Chamberlain in Artzuid, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
International Sculpture Route, Amsterdam, Pays-Bas
- 2012 *John Chamberlain. Photographs*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
John Chamberlain : Choices, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA ; Guggenheim-Museum, Bilbao, Spain
- 2011 *Chamberlain at Pace*, Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain. New Sculpture, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain. Photographs, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain. Curvatureromance, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany
- 2010 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2009/10 *John Chamberlain – Skulpturen*, Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden, Wuppertal, Germany
- 2008 *John Chamberlain, Recent Work*, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
- 2007 *John Chamberlain. Sculptures*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
- 2006 *John Chamberlain. New Works*, Xavier Hufkens Gallery, Bruxelles, Belgium
- 2005 *John Chamberlain – Foam Sculptures (1966 - 1979) and Photographs (1989 - 2004)*, The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX, USA
John Chamberlain. Without Fear, Waddington Galleries, London, UK
John Chamberlain. Papier Paradisio, Zeichnungen, Collagen, Reliefs, Bilder, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain. Recent Sculptures, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
- 2004 *John Chamberlain. Photographs*, Galerie Sabine Knust, Munich, Germany
John Chamberlain. Recent Sculpture, L.A. Louver, Venice, CA, USA
- 2002 *John Chamberlain. Skulptur und Fotografie*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain: Sculpture 1988 - 2001, Waddington Galleries, London, UK
American Icon: The Art of John Chamberlain, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY, USA
- 2001 *John Chamberlain. Candied Delights*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2000 *John Chamberlain. Sculpture. Selections from The Menil Collection and Dia Center for the Arts*, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA

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- John Chamberlain: Recent Sculpture*, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain. Fotografie und Skulptur, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
John Chamberlain: Fotografie und Skulptur, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
- 1999 *John Chamberlain: Fotografie e Scultura*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Milan, Italy
- 1998 *John Chamberlain: Chamberlain 's Faune Landscape*, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
- 1997/98 *John Chamberlain: Sculpture and Photographs*, Pace Wildenstein, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1997 *John Chamberlain: Abstract Sculptures*, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, Fullerton, CA, USA
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
John Chamberlain: Baby Tycoons, 1992 - 97, Galerie Daniel Blau, Munich, Germany
Baby Tycoons: Skulpturen von John Chamberlain, Museum für Lackkunst, Münster, Germany
John Chamberlain : Sculptures, Jablonka Galerie, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain: Sculpture and Photographs, Pace Wildenstein, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1996/97 *John Chamberlain*, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
- 1996 *John Chamberlain: Recent Sculpture*, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain : Current Work and Fond Memories, Sculptures and Photographs 1967 - 1995, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands ; Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, Germany
John Chamberlain: Couches & Related Sculpture, 1967 - 1971, A / D, New York, NY, USA
- 1995/96 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Milan, Italy
- 1995 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
- 1994/95 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
- 1994 *John Chamberlain: Recent Sculpture*, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 1993/94 *Wide Point: The Photography of John Chamberlain*, The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY ; Tampa Museum of Art, FL ; Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN, USA
- 1993 *Photographs by John Chamberlain*, Mira Mar Gallery, Sarasota, FL, USA
John Chamberlain Photographs, Galerie Sonia Zannettacci, Geneva, Switzerland
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
- 1992/93 *John Chamberlain : Neue Skulpturen*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
- 1992 *John Chamberlain*, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA ; Albert Totah, Milan, Italy
John Chamberlain: New Work, Dia Center for the Arts, Bridgehampton, NY, USA
John Chamberlain: Arbeiten auf Papier, Galerie Meyer-Ellinger, Frankfurt, Germany
John Chamberlain: Recent Work, Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1991 *John Chamberlain: Monotypes*, Pace Editions, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain, Retrospektive / retrospective, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden, Germany
John Chamberlain, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
Famous Last Words and Works on Paper, Bradley University, Peoria, IL, USA
- 1990/91 *John Chamberlain: Gondolas 1981 - 85 and Dooms Day Flotilla 1982*, Dia Art Foundation, New York, USA
- 1990 *John Chamberlain*, Waddington Galleries, London, UK
- 1989 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany
John Chamberlain: New Sculpture, Pace Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Sculpture 1960's - 1980's, Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, MO, USA
- 1987/88 *John Chamberlain*, Galerie Pierre Huber, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1987 *John Chamberlain : Recent Sculpture*, Fabian Carisson Gallery, London, UK
John Chamberlain : Skulpturen, Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany
John Chamberlain : Recent Sculpture, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
Sculpture, John Chamberlain, 1970s & 1980s, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA

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- 1986 *John Chamberlain: Oils*, Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich, Germany; Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne, Germany; Brooke Alexander, New York, NY; Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
John Chamberlain: Sculpture 1954 – 1985, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1985 *John Chamberlain: Sculpture*, Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1984 *John Chamberlain / Esculturas*, Palacio de Cristal, Parque del Retiro, Madrid, Spain
John Chamberlain: New Sculpture, Xavier Fourcade, Inc., New York, USA
John Chamberlain: Selected Prints, Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA
American Tableau, The Seagram Plaza, New York, USA; Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne, Germany; Galerie Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; The Art Museum of the Pecos, Marfa, TX; Dia Art Foundation, Marfa, TX, USA
- 1983 *John Chamberlain Reliefs 1960 – 1982*, The John and Mable Ringling Museum, Sarasota, FL
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, NY, USA
The Art Museum of the Pecos, Marfa, TX, USA
Dia Art Foundation, Marfa, TX, USA
- 1982/85 *John Chamberlain Sculpture: An Extended Exhibition*, Dia Art Foundation, New York, NY, USA
- 1982/84 *Chamberlain Gardens*, Dia Art Foundation, Essex, CT, USA
- 1982 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1980 Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
- 1979 Kunsthalle, Bern, Switzerland
- 1978 Heiner Friedrich, Cologne, Germany
- 1977/78 *The Texas Pieces, presented by the Dia Art Foundation*, New York Psychiatric Center, Ward's Island, NY, USA
- 1977 *View from the Cockpit*, Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Heiner Friedrich, Inc., New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain: An Exhibition of Sculpture: 1959 - 1962, Mayor Gallery, London, UK
- 1976 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1974 Walter Kelly Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 1973 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1972 *John Chamberlain/Fg Couches*, Lo Giudice Gallery, New York, collaboration with Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1971 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
John Chamberlain: A Retrospective Exhibition, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
- 1969 Leo Castelli Warehouse, New York, NY, USA
Mizuno Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1967 The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, USA
Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne, Germany
Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, Germany
- 1966 Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1965 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1964 Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, France
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1963 Pace Gallery, Boston, MA, USA
Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 1962 Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 1960 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1958 Davida Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 1957 Wells Street Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA

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John Chamberlain

Untitled
1986

2 parts: Monotype (mixed media) 2 parts: monotype (mixed media) on deckle edged paper
(Büttenpapier)

210 x 74 cm / 82 2/3 x 29 1/4 in

Frame : 229,5 x 91,5 x 5,5 cm / 90 1/3 x 36 x 2 1/4 in

Signed and stamped recto lower centre: John Chamberlain Novak Graphics, Toronto (Ed.)

JC/P 8

Photo: Galerie Karsten Greve
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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Selection of collective exhibitions

- 2022/23 *Future Bodies from a Recent Past – Sculpture, Technology and the Body around the 1950s*, Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany
- 2021 *Dubuffet / Chamberlain*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2020 *American Pastoral*, Gagosian Gallery, London, UK
- 2019 *John Chamberlain & Donald Judd*, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2018 *Königsklasse IV*, Pinakothek der Moderne/ Schloss Herrenchiemsee, Munich, Germany
- 2017/18 *Winter Show*, Galerie Karsten Greve, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2017 *Autumn Show*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2016 *Postwar. Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic 1945–1965*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany
- 2015 *America Is Hard to See*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
John Chamberlain. Prouvé, Gagosian Gallery & Galerie Patrick Seguin, New York, NY, USA
- 2014 *Accrochage*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 2013 *Something Turned into a Thing*, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2012 *Malerei in Fotografie*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2011 *Anti / Form - Skulpturen aus der Sammlung des MUMOK*, Kunsthhaus Graz, Graz, Austria
MMK 1991 - 2011: 20 Jahre Gegenwart, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
September 11, MoMA PS1, New York, NY, USA
- 2010 *Masters of the Gesture*, Gagosian Gallery - Beverly Hills, Beverly Hills, CA, USA
Painting, Process and Expansion, mumok - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria
- 2009 *American Tableau*, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, USA
- 2008 *Daniel Buren, John Chamberlain, Lawrence Wiener, Color Chart: Reinventing Colour, 1950 to Today*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
- 2007 *Correspondences: John Chamberlain / Vincent van Gogh*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France
Klio. Eine kurze Geschichte der Kunst in Euramerika nach 1945, ZKM - Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany
A point in space is a place for an argument, David Zwirner, New York, NY, USA
- 2006 *Venedig 1948 - 1986, The Art Scene*, The Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy
John Chamberlain / Bruce Nauman, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2005 *La Photographie en Parallèle*, La Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
BIG BANG. Destruction et Création dans l'Art de 20e siècle, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- 2004/05 *Opening Exhibition*, Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany
- 2004 *A Minimal Future? Art as Object 1958–1968*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 2003 *Dan Flavin and John Chamberlain. Sculptures*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, USA
- 2002/03 *Black Mountain College. Experimenting with Power*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain
- 2001 *The Lenore and Burton Gold Collection of 20th-Century Art*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, USA
De Kooning / Chamberlain. Influence and Transformation, Pace Wildenstein, New York, NY, USA
- 2000 *Art at Work: Forty Years of the Chase Manhattan Collection*, Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadows, NY, USA
John Chamberlain, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London, UK

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

- 1999/01 *Welded! Sculpture of the Twentieth Century*, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY, USA
In Company: Robert Creeley's Collaborations, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, New York; New York Public Library, New York; University of North Carolina at Greensboro Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, NC; University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum and Graphics Studio, Tampa, FL; Stanford University, Green Library, Stanford, CA, USA
- 1999/00 *The American Century Art & Culture 1900 - 2000*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1997 *In Celebration: Works of Art from the Collections of Princeton Alumni and Friends of The Art Museum Princeton University*, The Art Museum of the Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, USA
- 1996/97 *Passionate Pursuits: Hidden Treasures of the Garden State*, The Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ, USA
A Century of Sculpture: The Nasher Collection, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
- 1996 *Abstraction in the 20th Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
- 1995/96 *Beat Culture the New America: 1950 - 1965*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1994 *XXII International Biennial of São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1993 *American Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1913 - 1993*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany; Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK
- 1991/92 *American Life in American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1991 *Constructing American Identity*, Whitney Museum of American Art Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza, New York, NY, USA
- 1990/91 *Painted Forms: Recent Metal Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York, NY, USA
- 1988 *Contemporary American Art*, Ho-Am Gallery, Séoul, Corée du Sud; Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japon
- 1987 *1987 Biennial Exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
30 Years Retrospective of Leo Castelli Gallery, Masterpieces of Mid Century Art, Centro Cultural Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico, Mexico
- 1986 *Qu'est-ce que c'est la sculpture moderne?* Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- 1985 *Transformations in Sculpture: Four Decades of American and European Art*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
- 1984/85 *Gemini G. E. L. Art and Collaboration*, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA
Overture, Castello di Rivoli, Arte Contemporanea Internazionale, Turin, Italy
- 1984 *La Rime et la raison : Les Collections Menil (Houston - New York)*, Grand Palais, Paris, France
American Sculpture: Three Decades, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, USA
- 1983 *20th Century Sculpture: Process and Presence*, Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York, NY, USA
In Honor of de Kooning, Xavier Fourcade, New York, NY, USA
The Nuclear Age: Tradition and Transition, Phoenix Art Museum, AZ, USA
Sculpture, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, USA
- 1982 *Castelli and His Artists/ Twenty - Five Years*, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA, USA
documenta 7, Kassel, Germany
American Sculpture from the Permanent Collection, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Sculpture from the Vanderbilt Art Collection, Vanderbilt Art Gallery, Nashville, TN, USA

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- The New York School: Four Decades*, Guggenheim Collection and Major Loans, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY, New York, USA
- 1981 *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI, USA
Twentieth Century American Art: Highlights of the Permanent Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1980 *Faszination des Objekts*, mumok - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria
American Sculpture; Gifts of Howard and Jean Lipman, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Permanent Collection, Fort Worth Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, USA
Reliefs / Formprobleme zwischen Malerei und Skulptur im 20. Jahrhundert, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
- The Guggenheim Collection, 1900 - 1980*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Across the Nation: Fine Art for Federal Buildings, 1972 - 1979, National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA
- 1979/80 *Soft Art Exhibition*, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
- 1979 *Collection: Art in America after World War II*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Contemporary Sculpture: Selections from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1978 *Collection: American Sculpture*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Art About Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; North Carolina; Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; The Frederick S. Wright Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Portland Art Museum, OR, USA
American Art 1950 to the Present, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1977 *Collectors Collect Contemporary; a Selection from Boston Collections*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, USA
Permanent Collection; Thirty Years of American Art 1945 - 1975, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Recent Acquisitions, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
20th Century American Art from Friends' Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1976 *Three Hundred Years of American Art in the Chrysler Museum*, The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA, USA
200 Years of American Sculpture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1975 *Sculpture of the 60s*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1974 *Poets of the Cities New York and San Francisco 1950 - 1965*, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, USA
Works from Change, Inc., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1973 *Whitney Biennial: Painting and Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
The Private Collection of Martha Jackson, The University of Maryland Art Gallery, College Park, MD, USA
- 1972/73 *American Art since 1945*, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA, USA
New York Collection for Stockholm, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, USA; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1972 *Recent American Painting and Sculpture*, The Albright - Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, USA
Wreck, Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center, Fredonia, NY, USA
- 1971 *Younger Abstract Expressionists of the Fifties*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
Selections from the Museum Collection and Recent Acquisitions, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
- 1970 *The Highway*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Whitney Annual: Sculpture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Metamorphose des Dinges, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium

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- 1969 *New Media, New Methods*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Soft Art, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ, USA
New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940 – 1969, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA
Summer Group Show, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Benefit Exhibition: Art for the Moratorium, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Contemporary American Sculpture, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1968/69 *Sammlung 1968 Karl Strober*, Galerie - Verein München, Neue Pinakothek, Haus der Kunst, Munich; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany
- 1968 *Annual Exhibition of Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Sammlung Habn: Zeitgenössische Kunst, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, Germany
Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Mayer, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, USA
- 1967 *Sculpture - A Generation of Innovation*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
American Sculpture of the Sixties, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA
A Selection from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rowan, University of California, Irvine, CA, USA
The 1960s: Painting and Sculpture from the Museum Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
The 1967 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
- 1966 *Contemporary American Sculpture: Selection I*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Annual of Sculpture and Prints, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Art of the United States: 1670 - 1966, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Hommage a Caissa, Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery, New York, USA, organisé par Marcel Duchamp
- 1965 *Whitney Annual*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
Painting and Sculpture Today, Herron Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, USA
Painting without a Brush, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, USA
American Sculpture 1900 - 1965, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI, USA
Seven Sculptors, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Modern Sculpture USA, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA
Virginia Dwan Kondratief Collection, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1964 *New American Sculpture*, Pasadena Art Museum, California, CA, USA
The Biennale Eight, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, USA
Circarama Building, New York State Pavilion at the World's Fair, New York, NY, USA
The Atmosphere of '64, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Painting and Sculpture of a Decade, Tate Gallery, London, UK
La Biennale di Venezia – 32nd International Art Exhibition, Venice, Italy
Twenty - Fourth Annual Exhibition by the Society for Contemporary American Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
Recent American Sculpture, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY, USA
Sculpture Annual, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1962 *65th Annual American Exhibition: Some Directions in Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, The Art Institute of Chicago, IL, USA
John Chamberlain / Frank Stella, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA
Modern Sculpture from The Joseph H. Hirschhorn Collection, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY, USA
Annual of Sculpture and Drawing, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA
- 1961 *VI Bienal*, Museu d'Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brésil

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The Art of Assemblage, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

Ways and Means, Houston Contemporary Arts Association, Houston, TX, USA

Sculpture and relief, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

An exhibition in progress, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1960 / 61

Annual of Sculpture and Drawing, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA

1959 / 60

Recent Sculpture USA, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA

1959

Work in three dimensions, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, NY, USA

1958

Hansa Gallery, New York, NY, USA



John Chamberlain

Tonk #15-86

1986

Paintd steel

26 x 54 x 36,8 cm / 10 1/4 x 21 1/4 x 14 1/2 in

JC/S 63

Photo: Galerie Karsten Greve

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.

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John Chamberlain

Studio 1994 P106/107

1994

Chromogenic print

Ed. 3/9

50,8 x 61 cm / 20 x 24 in

Frame: 76 x 84,5 x 3 cm

Signed and numbered recto lower right: *Chamberlain 3/9*

Stamped by the artist

0363-26-1994

JC/F 127

Photo : Galerie Karsten Greve.

Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz.

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Télérama

La Chronique d'Olivier Céné

Par Olivier Céné, dans *Télérama*, Février 2020

Sur le cadre de ses tableaux, le peintre flamand Jan Van Eyck (v. 1390-1441), que la ville de Gand célèbre en ce moment par une grande exposition, inscrivait sa devise (en lettres imitant l'alphabet grec) : « *Als ich can* », ce qui se traduit par « Du mieux que je peux. Ainsi peut se résumer le parcours d'un artiste : il aura, sa vie entière, donné le meilleur de lui-même. Mais ce donc n'est pas uniquement proportionnel à sa générosité et à sa passion ; il dépend aussi de son talent.

Le meilleur de Van Eyck, l'un des plus grands peintres de l'Histoire, touche au sublime. Il en avait, pense-t-on, conscience. Aussi sa devise peut-elle être comprise comme l'expression d'une fausse modestie.

Un artiste, n'importe quel artiste, même le plus inféodé aux modes du moment, fait donc toujours de son mieux – le mieux dépendant ici de son exigence. Si Pierre Soulages, par exemple, dont le Louvre célèbre actuellement le centenaire, peint des tableaux noirs depuis plus de quarante ans, c'est tout simplement parce qu'il ne peut pas faire autrement. Il les peint le mieux possible. Or, l'art étant de plus en plus une affaire de décoration de demeures et de boutiques luxueuses, la simplicité et l'évidence de ses tableaux impressionnent. Un Soulages, depuis près d'un demi-siècle, c'est l'impact d'une tache noire sur un mur blanc. On comprend aussi l'évolution des artistes minimalistes américains, leur vieillissement, leur adaptation aux conceptions actuelles de l'art. Ils créèrent l'événement au milieu des années 1960, mais une fois cet événement fixé dans l'Histoire, une fois la théorie épuisée, ne demeurent le plus souvent que des objets décoratifs, une sorte de design gratuit. Ainsi Robert Grosvenor, né en 1937, qui conçoit des formes sculpturales (puisque c'est du volume), souvent allusives (comme la forme verte évoque l'écran de l'ordinateur iMac imaginé par Apple en 1998 pour relancer ses ventes), toujours élégantes, parfois improbables, d'une facture irréprochable. Robert Grosvenor fait le mieux qu'il peut pour se renouveler et trouver des formes originales. C'est un souci.

John Chamberlain (1927-2011) était de la génération précédant celle de Grosvenor, un expressionniste abstrait, tout ce contre quoi luttèrent les minimalistes. Il tordait et assemblait de la ferraille, des bouts de carcasses de voitures, le plus souvent colorés – de Kooning en volume, en quelque sorte.

Ça ne marche pas toujours. Quand il y a trop de tôles, trop de couleurs, trop de massivité et de surcharge, l'œuvre s'épuise dans le kitsch – sentiment que donnent aussi les photographies de l'artiste. Mais John Chamberlain sait aussi bistourner un simple fût bicolore ou plier une grande plaque en zinc monochrome gris. Et lorsqu'il rend hommage à son ancien professeur au Black Mountain College, le poète Charles Olson (1910-1970), lorsqu'il lui façonne une gondole baroque, l'exigence monte d'un cran, apportant à son amas de tôles biscornues beaucoup de légèreté, de délicatesse et de subtilité.

L'exposition Van Eyck commence donc à Gand alors que se termine celle du Greco (1541-1614) à Paris. Cette dernière est un bijou. On y voit un jeune peintre d'icônes crétois de 26 ans d'une exigence extrême étudier Titien et le Tintoret à Venise, puis Michel-Ange à Rome, avant de partir à Tolède en 1577 et de devenir El Greco, l'un des plus grands artistes de l'Histoire. On y voit de petites œuvres de jeunesse flamboyantes, des compositions inédites et l'un des plus beaux portraits du monde (*Hortensio Félix Paravicino*, v. 1611), peint nul n'en doute, de la *mejor manera que podìa*.

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LA GAZETTE DROUOT

Chamberlain in Paris

Par Alain Quemin, dans *Gazette Drouot*, Mars 2020.

Aujourd'hui reconnu comme l'un des plus grands sculpteurs de la seconde moitié du XXe et du début du XXIe siècle, l'artiste américain John Chamberlain a créé de la fin des années 1950 jusqu'à sa disparition il y a huit ans. L'exposition de la galerie Karsten Greve se concentre sur une période plus restreinte, de 1967 à 1995, avec un focus sur 1989 et le tout début de la décennie 1990. Comme on peut s'y attendre, la sculpture en métal est à l'honneur, avec des pièces magnifiques : elles illustrent bien la volonté de leur auteur d'exploiter tant les volumes que la couleur. Une œuvre de taille moyenne, évoquant un bidon compressé, marie harmonieusement des tons roses, lie de vin et paille. On retrouve ici ce que l'on connaît le mieux du travail de Chamberlain. Toutefois, l'exposition vaut également par le regard renouvelé qu'elle pose sur les domaines qu'il a investis. En effet, la présentation s'accompagne de quelques œuvres sur papier – pastel et vernis, acrylique, technique mixte – et d'un nombre important de photographies. Datant essentiellement de 1989, celles-ci prolongent admirablement le corpus en volume de l'artiste. Dans des formats généralement horizontaux, Chamberlain crée des déformations d'images qui suggèrent le mouvement. Comme dans les sculptures, son intervention fait passer de la figuration, qui caractérisait les matériaux initiaux, à l'abstraction induite par le travail artistique. La scénographie, aérée, convient bien à une œuvre visuellement riche. Et la dernière salle réserve une superbe surprise.



John Chamberlain (1927-2011), *Kiss #12*,
1979, acier peint, 76 x 78,5 x 68,5 cm.

COURTESY OF GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE KÖLN PARIS ST. MORITZ,
PHOTOGRAPHE : CHARLES DUPRAT, PARIS

Galerie Karsten Greve,
5, rue Debelleye, Paris IIIe,
tél. : 01 42 77 19 37,
www.galerie-karsten-greve.com
Jusqu'au 18 mars 2020.

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

connaissance des arts



VOIR ET COLLECTIONNER CHAMBERLAIN

Il est toujours fascinant de découvrir des pièces inédites de ceux qui ont fait l'histoire de l'art. La galerie Karsten Greve, qui travaille avec John Chamberlain (1927-2011) depuis 1973, dévoile ainsi une nouvelle sélection de ses sculptures, collages, monotypes et photographies. « *Son marché est totalement international, nous précise-t-on à la galerie, et autant privé qu'institutionnel. D'ailleurs, le Centre Pompidou possède plusieurs de ses œuvres.* » Si les sculptures débutent à 200 000 €, les photographies commencent à 26 000 €, montrant de nombreuses vues de Paris, ville où l'Américain avait avoir pris quelques-uns de ses plus beaux clichés. Il est donc encore possible d'approprier une partie de cet univers, élaboré au Black Mountain College au milieu des années 1950. **M. M.**

John Chamberlain,
Kiss #12, 1979,
acier peint,
76 x 78,5 x 68,5 cm
©GALERIE KARSTEN
GREVE/CHARLES DUPRAT.

« **JOHN CHAMBERLAIN.
CHAMBERLAIN IN
PARIS** », galerie
Karsten Greve, 5, rue
Debelleyme, 75003
Paris, 01 42 77 19 37,
galerie-karsten-greve.
com du 18 janvier
au 18 mars.

CONNAISSANCE DES ARTS / MARS 2020 • 109



EDITION FRANÇAISE

THE ART NEWSPAPER

La galerie Karsten Greve inaugure ce week-end une exposition sur un illustre disciple du Black Mountain College, John Chamberlain (1927-2011). Celle-ci dévoilera une sélection d'œuvres (photographies et sculptures), réalisées entre les années 1960 et le début de la décennie 1990.

« **John Chamberlain in Paris** », du 18 janvier au 18 avril, galerie Karsten Greve, 75003 Paris, www.galerie-karsten-greve.com

John Chamberlain, *Kiss #28*, 1979, acier peint, 63,5 cm x 90 cm x 53,5 cm.

Photo : Georges Poncet, Paris.

© Galerie Karsten Greve Köln Paris St. Moritz



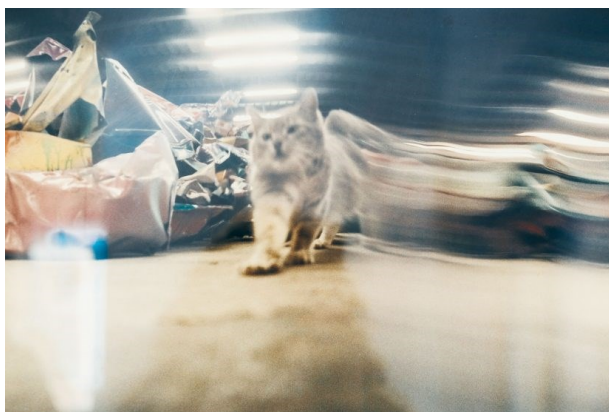
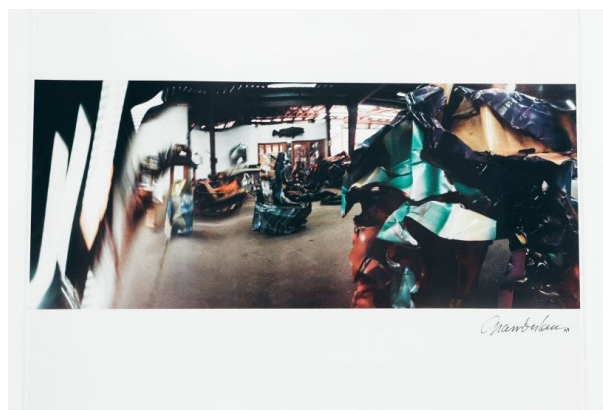
GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

PURPLE

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN “PHOTOGRAPHS” EXHIBITION AT GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE, PARIS

Galerie Karsten Greve presents “Photographs”, an exhibition devoted to the American eclectic artist JOHN CHAMBERLAIN, who — since the early 1960s — has left his mark on contemporary art as one of the most influential representatives of the three-dimensional Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art movement.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN’s *modus operandi* consisted in exploring innovative possible correlations between materials by creating particular metal sculptures, constructed from discarded automobile-body parts and other debris from the motor industry. These assembly works appear as interesting examples of dynamic and erotic beauty.

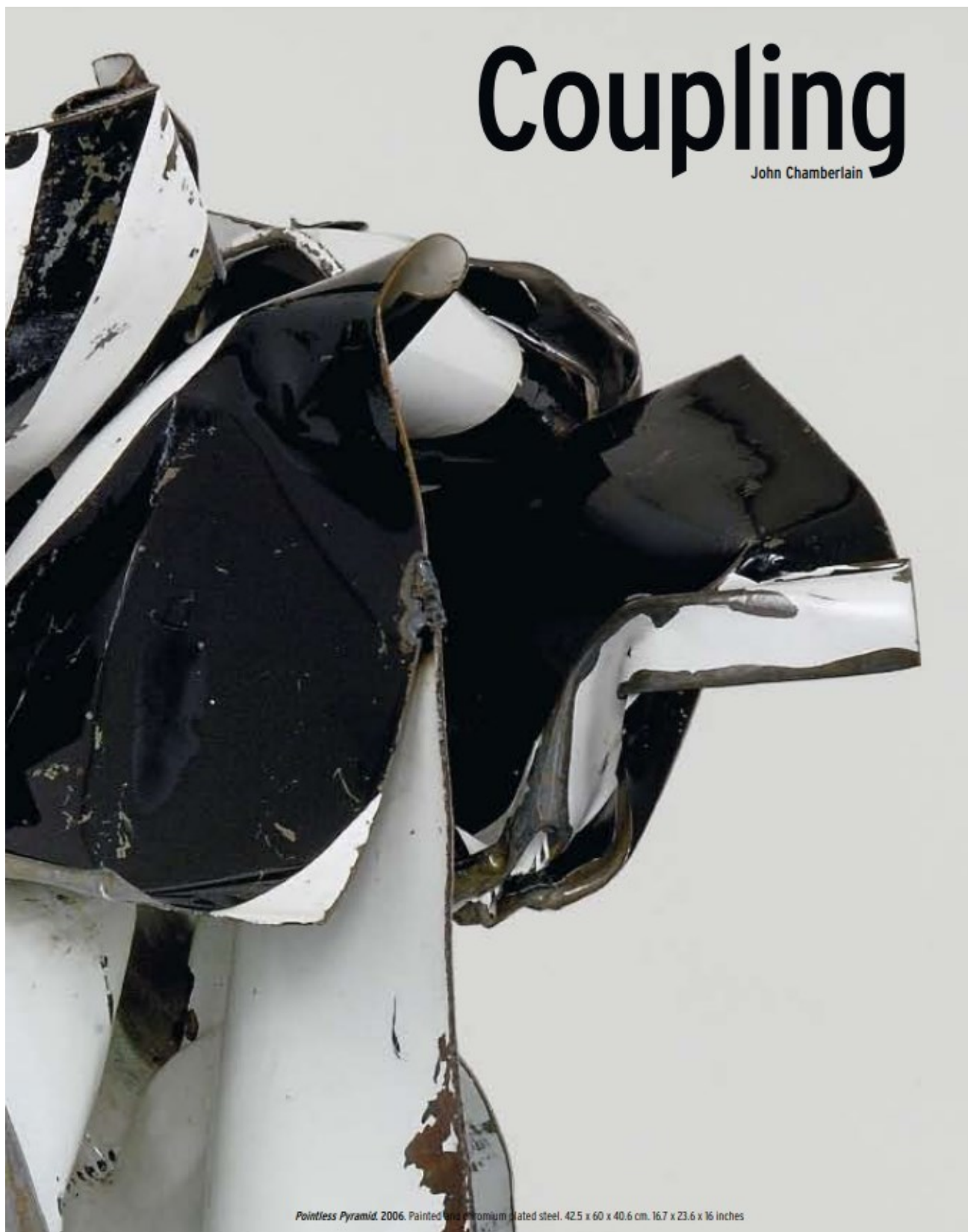


Following the same principles of his sculptural production and under the influence of the Futuristic artists, since 1977 CHAMBERLAIN has been producing a serie of photographs marked by a singular interest in improvisation and experimentation in which the subjects come out distorted and poetically disappear into a flux of colors.

On view until April 29th, 2017 at *Galerie Karsten Greve*, 5 rue Debelleye, Paris.

Photo Inès Manai

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KLAUS KERTESS COUPLING

Idoménee, 2009

While visiting his friend Larry Rivers in Southampton, in 1957, as he was ruminating on the lack of materials and tools he needed to continue creating the welded steel -sculptures that had preoccupied him for the last several years, John Chamberlain saw a 1929 Ford standing nearby. Quite suddenly he found himself detaching the two front bumpers from the Ford, twisting some metal wire around them; and then, finding the result not completely satisfying, he drove over them once or twice and called what he had done *Shortstop*. In the brief span of this spontaneous seemingly delinquent act, Chamberlain transformed himself from being a highly gifted acolyte of David Smith to one of the most original and compelling sculptors of the 20th century (still going strong in the current century). Chamberlain had, in effect, re-introduced and re-invented the volume, modelling, casting, and variegated color that had increasingly been dispelled from modernist sculpture – and volume, modelling, casting, and color were all -readymade. The proliferation of used and abused car parts piled high in many a -junkyard, often referred to by Chamberlain as American marble, quickly replaced the linear writing in space beholden to Julio Gonzalez's, Picasso's, and subsequently Smith's early sculptures with luminous cascades of curving color constantly billowing in and out, refusing closure while clearly embodying the process of creation that had been made so critical by the previous generation of Abstract Expressionists like -Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning.

Since 1958, painted steel car parts have been Chamberlain's primary medium; and he found his art materials in junkyards, selecting them for their color and roundness and piling them up in his studio. Each piece was (and continues to be) treated as an individual entity and might be worked on with one or more of a variety of tools – a slicer, a steel cutting chisel, an acetylene torch, a bandsaw, a grinder, a truck, and a compactor. Each of these pieces of junk metal becomes a kind of three-dimensional brushstroke. The visual weight, color and volume of which is carefully considered as Chamberlain engages in a kind of combinative play in which he seeks what he refers to as a »fit« or »sexual fit« with one piece to another to another to another, until the assembled components have acquired visually seductive and authoritative presence. Little is preordained; the parts must attract each other into consummation. This ad hoc conjoining remains visible to the viewer and is always self-supporting. After completion, the pieces are spot welded together so that the sculpture can be transported.

In the course of the first half of the 1960s, Chamberlain's growing understanding and mastery of his junkyard palette evolved into a fuller panoply of curvaceous -volumes and Detroit colors billowing into more expansive scale and stature. From 1966 to 1972 Chamberlain took a sabbatical from car-part-assembling and embarked on a variety of other sculptural enterprises, starting with a short-lived experiment with -preconceived forms based on a french-curve and made out of fiberglass. Next he began to work with squeezed, bound, and tied pieces of urethane foam resulting in slow, -bulging organic sensuousness. The buoyant beauty and simplicity of these works call to Chamberlain's often stated acknowledgement of the ordinary, everyday sculptural acts such as wadding toilet paper, squeezing a sponge, wringing out a wet towel, blowing up and popping a paper bag, et al that all of us practice during our daily routines. The -tactile directness and utter transparency and clarity of process evident in the urethane sculptures make Chamberlain an as yet to be properly recognized pioneer of what would shortly become known as *Process Art* in which malleable materials such as -molten lead, felt, latex, et al were subjected to ordinary acts of splashing, tearing, -pouring et al by such artists as Richard Serra, Barry Le Va, Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman and Lynda Benglis.

While Chamberlain would continue creating the urethane foam pieces, in 1967 he also began a new group of metal work, now abandoning the use of colored steel. He had galvanized steel boxes fabricated in dimensions of approximately 42 x 28 x 18 inches. He first manipulated these boxes with a compactor then moved them to his studio for completion. The mechanical fabrication employed by many a *Minimalist* sculptor in the 1960s was now

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

subverted by the vagaries of intuitive tactility – indeed, many people mistakenly thought these boxes fabricated for Chamberlain were boxes previously ordered by Donald Judd that had been accidentally damaged and then been given by Judd to his friend Chamberlain. The galvanized steel pieces such as *Papagayo* and *Ultima Thule* that initiate the works discussed in this essay tend to be more angular than the previous painted steel pieces – they now seem to allude to the drapery of Classical Greek and Roman sculpture, now to the overlapping geometries of Cubism but always return to the visceral acts of compaction that created them. *Ultima Thule* might be a relative of the Victory of Samothrace – still more battered and abraded but not without a kind of majesty. Chamberlain's modelling endows industrial uniformity and standardization with unique singularity and beauty.

With the exception of nine painted and chromium-plated steel pieces Chamberlain created in 1969, after he saw an abundance of discarded refrigerators, washing machines, and stoves on the way into Chicago, Chamberlain continued his abstention from painted steel until 1972, when it would again resume its place as his primary medium. The same baroque curves and twists, concavities and convexities still animate the multiplicity of colored parts; however, now Chamberlain was more prone to introduce more disparate parts into his excessive voluminousness, as can be seen in *Double-Hooded Jim* (1974). Likely to be sections of car bumpers, narrow relatively unassaulted bands of blue cap (hood) the larger sized and scaled, lavishly crumpled volume of yellow that looks vaguely like a hood for a giant's head and started its life as a car hood – a car hood become a human hood capped by a smaller, stringier hood to play a double-hooded game of hide and seek the volume.

Never one to hold purity in high regard, Chamberlain had from time to time -touched up some of his found colored car parts. In 1976, he began to perform more -visible painted interventions upon his parts – but only before beginning the quest for each part's physically compatible partner, rather than creating a false harmony by adding paint after all the pieces had been joined. Like the encounters of volume to volume, color and volume had to continuously arouse each other not just simply acquiesce in harmony. No closure is sought. Chamberlain might opt for a variety of colors and a variety of visible currents and counter currents of paint as he did for the twisting verticality of *Full Quartz* (1977) or employ a more uniform application of colors as he did in his continuing series of *Socket* and *Kiss* works (both started in 1974), the latter visually punning on the seemingly compacted couple of Brancusi's stone *Kiss* (1908). This more uniform treatment is fitting for works made from a single compacted volume as the *Sockets* are, or two of the same volume as the *Kisses* are – both created with oil drums. One of the lush of the latter, *Kiss #12* (1979) with its vaginal crease running down the center of one of its sides and curvaceous intertwining volumetrics of faded mauve, yellow and purple enfolds steamy tropical allusions.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the sculptures often took on still fuller more energetic volumes with more vibrant and varied embraces of color joining in. At the same time, Chamberlain began a group of lower key, lower profile, long horizontal pieces using channels of automobile-chassis bases left over from a commissioned sculpture some nineteen feet in height. They came to be known as *Gondolas* and were dedicated to poets and fiction writers known and / or admired by Chamberlain. *Gondola Charles Olson* (1982) is dedicated to the poet teaching at Black Mountain, who together with the younger poet and soon-to-be close friend Robert Creeley had a powerful -influence on Chamberlain's thinking. Both poets favored directness, clarity of process and the everyday. Creeley had his students »collect« words. Chamberlain did, isolated the words, looked at them, and then combined them in new combinations and would later state that this was not much different than his combining of symbiotic physical volumes. The parallels are readily reflected in many of the playful combinations of words recontextualizing their original meanings to be found / seen in Chamberlain's titles such as *Impurient Whey*, *Insistant Feather*, *For Flute & Elbon*, et al. Like most of the *Gondolas* this one is combined of elements more horizontal, more discrete – often seeming to be just loosely piled. The *Gondola's* long low horizontality encourages a reading from left to right into an accumulated meaning. This flotilla of visual events given to the viewer to ponder and decipher evolves into a graceful, often tender valedictory sentence to the writer named in the title.

More boisterous are *Impurient Whey* and *Lorelei's Passion* (both 1982) with their decidedly erect compacted tubular volumes painted with a bold graffiti-like giraffe skin pattern. They seem on the verge of breaking into a male mating ritual. Indeed, jubilation of one variety or another is embodied in many of the sculptures Chamberlain

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-created in the 1980s. The multiplicity of parts, colors, and paint application seen in the baroque balled up volume of *Insistant Feather* and *Plastic Virtue* (both 1989) risks chaos but continually pulls the viewer's eyes back into joyous revel. Early on -Chamberlain found much to admire in Willem de Kooning's paintings with their -agitated surfeit of strokes; his excess was almost never too much. The same can be said for Chamberlain's surfeit of curved and compacted painted steel parts that indeed often look like gestural strokes of paint. Although there is far more articulation than is necessary to articulate the volume, not a single steel part or color seems superfluous.

In the 1990s, Chamberlain began to employ thinner, lighter, longer, and more malleable pieces of painted steel; and his sculptures took on an often leaner agility. *Inca Dinke Dew* (1991) with its bunching of twisted and twirled painted limb-like parts and cascade of lubricious folds looks like a carnivalesque bacchanal. The pliability of the lighter parts made it possible to create a greater variety of modelled concavities and convexities, now crinkled, now angular, now rounded, now tubular, now folded. In *Phantom Snatch* (1991), the volumetric curves and dents so prevalent in the earlier painted steel sculptures has been replaced with a seemingly liquid flow of sparkling ripples – indeed imparting a kind of phantom presence to this astonishing black and white wall piece.

Many of the painted parts configuring the works in the 1990s were formed from steel car and truck bumpers that were becoming increasingly scarce, as the steel fabrication had been replaced by fabrication out of plastics. And so for a number of years now, Chamberlain has been purchasing the steel tops of vans that have been cut off to be replaced by larger tops. These discarded tops are cut into strips, painted, and then subjected to crushing, first on the front, then the sides. All this is done via Chamberlain's telephonic instructions to the studio he still maintains in Sarasota; and then the pieces are sent to his Shelter Island studio, piled on the floor to await his seductive matchmaking. He has taken full advantage of this material's greater pliability as can be seen in *For Flute & Elbow* (2005) with its dizzying dance of rippling colored curves that would not have been readily possible to create out of the heavier steel Chamberlain previously employed.

Chamberlain's sculpture is a joyous triumph. He has not only reintroduced to sculpture a startling panoply of color heavily reliant on chance procedures but also completely reinvented the ancient art of modelling that lapsed completely as modernism's tenets increasingly mandated hands-off fabrication. And he has achieved this by retrieving the detritus of the car culture that dominated much of the 20th century and is now reluctantly waning – and by employing industrial tools not previously in sculpture's repertoire to create a vibrant, erotic, and profound beauty.

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



Anamika

For any enquiries, please contact:
info@galerie-karsten-greve.fr

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE PARIS

5, rue Debelleye
F-75003 Paris
Tel. +33 (0)1 42 77 19 37
Fax +33 (0)1 42 77 05 58
info@galerie-karsten-greve.fr

Hours :
Tue – Sat : 10h - 19h

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE KÖLN

Drususgasse 1-5
D-50667 Cologne
Tel. +49 (0)221 257 10 12
Fax +49 (0)221 257 10 13
info@galerie-karsten-greve.de

Hours :
Tue – Fri : 10h – 18h30
Sat: 10h – 18h

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE AG ST. MORITZ

Via Maistra 4
CH-7500 St. Moritz
Tel. +41 (0)81 834 90 34
Fax +41 (0)81 834 90 35
info@galerie-karsten-greve.ch

Hours :
Tue – Fri: 10h -13h /
14h – 18h30
Sat: 10h – 13h / 14h – 18h

Galerie Karsten Greve online :

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