

for immediate release:

LINDA KARSHAN, *SIGNS OF MEN*

March 11 – April 5, 2015

Opening: **Wednesday, March 11, 6-9 PM**

Sunday, March 29, 4-5 PM:

A conversation with Linda Karshan
and Dr. Mark McDonald,
Curator of Prints, Dept. of Drawings & Prints,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Linda Karshan's drawing in her London studio, still from video by Candida Richardson, *Movements, and their Images*, 2009 © Candida Richardson

Brooklyn, NY, February 5, 2015 – ART 3 proudly presents the first US solo exhibition in many years of works by **LINDA KARSHAN. *SIGNS OF MEN*** will be on view at ART 3 gallery at 109 Ingraham Street in Bushwick, Brooklyn, from March 11 to April 5, 2015, Wed-Sat 12-6, Sun 1-6. The opening will take place on **Wednesday, March 11, from 6-9 PM.**

“A first encounter with her work brings to mind a post minimalist aesthetic such as that of [...] Eva Hesse. [...] In the case of Karshan, however, [it] is less about the relationship of forms in space in a way that may be translated into three dimensions than it is about movement in time and space.”

- Suzanne Cotter, in: *Linda Karshan*, exhibition catalogue, IVAM, Valencia, Spain 2002

Linda Karshan's career has been steadily growing since the early 1990's. She is best known for her drawings and prints on paper, which combine the rigor of minimalist abstraction with the spontaneity and expressiveness of a very personal marking system. For Karshan, drawing is a highly disciplined physical activity, which can be described as being choreographed. It has been said that *“as Jackson Pollock ‘performed’ his drip paintings, she ‘dances’ her drawings”* (Lynn McRitchie, in: *Linda Karshan*, exhibition catalogue, IVAM, Valencia, Spain, 2002). Her works are also appreciated for their philosophical and literary references to certain texts by Plato and Beckett's plays, among others.

Karshan's work has attracted a dedicated following among critics, philosophers, writers and collectors. An American, she has been primarily residing in London since 1968, and her works are in such European collections as the British Museum or the Courtauld Institute, where they were presented together with masters of European prints such as Mantegna, Bruegel, Canaletto, Picasso, Matisse and Freud. Following the recent acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of 11 prints spanning 25 years of her career, the exhibition at ART3 will draw attention in the US to this extraordinary artist.

ART 3 will present, for the first time, ***Summer Drawings, 2014*** and ***Footfalls, a series of 27 etchings***, drawn and printed in Copenhagen, in the workshop of Niels Borch Jensen. These two most recent series represent a critical juncture in the development of the work, wherein diagonals and curves have reappeared, taking their place among the horizontals and verticals that have characterized Karshan's work since 1996. The show will contextualize Karshan's newest work by including a selection of drawings since 1993, and a **video by Candida Richardson, *Movements, and their Images* (2009)**, which observes the artist's unique working method.

The title of the exhibition, ***Signs of Men***, comes from a story related by Vitruvius (Marcus Vitruvius Polio, *De Architectura. Book VI*, ca. 15BC): the 4th century BC Greek philosopher, Aristippus, shipwrecked and cast on the shore of Rhodes, noticed some geometrical figures scratched into the sand – triangles, or circles, or lines suspended from points. He said to his companions: *“we can hope for the best, for I see signs of men.”*

On **Sunday, March 29, 4-5 PM**, *Balance in Determination: Walking with Linda Karshan* will feature the **artist in conversation with Dr. Mark McDonald**, Curator of Prints, Dept. of Drawings & Prints, the **Metropolitan Museum of Art.**

MORE ABOUT THE WORK

"Responding intuitively to her own movements and, simultaneously, elaborating a rigorous structure by means of counting and repetition are at the heart of Karshan's approach. [...] these actions, which involve both disciplined and intuitive movement, can best be defined as a kind of dance: choreographed but freely executed expression."

– Marilyn McCully, in: *Measure Without Measure. The Art of Linda Karshan*, London 2001

"Karshan bypasses the active role of the eye to draw directly on pulsations of the body." [...] Like Michaux [...], Karshan, responding to her own internal rhythm, becomes both subject and object of her work, the maker and the made, the perceiver, and the perceived."

– Suzanne Cotter, in: *Linda Karshan*, exhibition catalogue, IVAM, Valencia, Spain 2002

Linda Karshan's work represents seemingly impossible tension between two aesthetic strategies: the freedom of the unconscious and perfection of grids rooted in the Bauhaus. She came to her restrained yet freely executed drawings by an unorthodox path. At Skidmore College she studied with Robert Reed, a student of Joseph Albers, who influenced both the mathematical basis of her work and her approach to proportion and form. Later, she studied art history at the Sorbonne in Paris and the Slade in London where she developed interest in Surrealism, specifically its experiments with automatic drawing. But it was her MA thesis on D.W. Winnicott's psychological theories of children at play which inspired her to create drawings in an unselfconscious state induced through marching, counting and rotating paper sheets.

Her early works from 1983, show a strong connection with Jackson Pollock and the surrealists Masson and Matta. In 1994, her disciplined, yet intuitive, working method emerged: she taps her foot and counts in sequences of 2, 4, 8 or 16, sometimes marching around the studio. She continues counting when she begins to draw, placing her lines intuitively, in accordance with the given rhythm. At the end of each sequence of numbers, she rotates the paper 90° counterclockwise. Each drawing is created in a continuous, uninterrupted 'take'; she works sequentially, producing a series of them in several intense sessions. Left-handed, she purposefully draws with her right, 'wrong,' hand to enhance unpredictability. In adhering to both control and chance, Karshan follows one of her masters, Duchamp.

Over the course of 30 years, she moved away from depiction, her drawings gradually became more geometric. She stands firmly within the Minimalist tradition of the 60's and 70's, and is often compared to such artists as Agnes Martin, Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, and Carl Andre. But what differentiates Linda Karshan's work from the mainstream of Minimal Art is that her measure comes not from calculation but from the rhythms of counting and rotating, emanating deep from within her body; her drawings are not planned but ruled by intuition; her lines are not straight.

Linda Karshan stresses the necessity of constant practice, but also of surrendering conscious mind in order to allow the body to take over. This transitional state she induces through inner rhythm, the rhythm of breathing. But the relation between the body and her creative process goes beyond the performative: Karshan marking out her proportions calls to mind Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. Her visual language – that of symmetric and proportioned quality related to the human form – is deeply embedded in western artistic practice as inherited from antiquity.

Karshan often refers to philosophy and literature, drawing inspiration from figures as diverse as Plato, Paul Klee, Jorge Luis Borges and, especially, Samuel Beckett, whose characters famously spend their time repeating pointless activities – like 'marching around' the stage – through which they manifest that they are alive. An effort to capture the state of absolute presence (as if in a moment of epiphany) is the core of her work. She admits it, quoting Plato's *Timaeus*: "*For we say that it 'was,' or 'is,' or 'will be,' but the truth is that 'is' alone is properly attributed to 'it.'*" Karshan's every 'mark' on paper is an equivalent of a specific moment in time, its unique signature. Her art is a human measure of the world. It is an affirmation of curiosity, a means of cognition, and a notation of time understood as a proof of our existence.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

LINDA KARSHAN, American, b. 1947 in Minneapolis, MN, lives and works in London, UK, and New York, NY. She was **educated** at Skidmore College, NY (1965-67); the Sorbonne, Paris (1967-68); and the Slade School of Art, University College, London (1969). In 1983, she earned a Masters in Humanistic Psychology from Antioch Centre for British Studies, London. Her MA thesis, *Play, Creativity and the Birth of the Self*, focused on D.W. Winnicott's theories of transitional space and creativity, which are central to Karshan's artistic practice.

Karshan's **solo museum exhibitions** include among others these at the Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany (2008); Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK (2003); Sir John Soane's Museum, London, UK (2002); and Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain (2002). Her works were featured in **group exhibitions** at the Courtauld Gallery, London, UK (2014, 2012), Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK (2013, 2010), Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, Germany (2013), British Museum, London, UK (2010), and Graphische Sammlung, Munich, Germany (2009).

Karshan's drawings, prints and artist's books are held in public and private **collections**, including in the UK: The British Library, The British Museum, The Courtauld Institute of Art – all in London, The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; in the US: Fogg Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; The Morgan Library, New York, NY; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; and have been recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ABOUT ART 3

ART 3 opened in Bushwick in May 2014 near Lushing Augustine, created by **Silas Shabelewska**, formerly of **Haunch of Venison** and **Helly Nahmad Gallery** in partnership with **Monika Fabijanska**, former Director of the Polish Cultural Institute in New York.

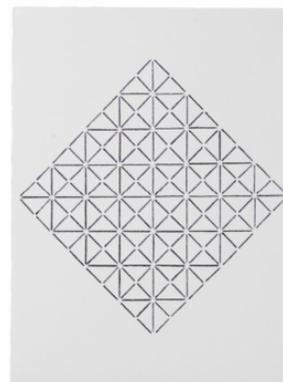
Detailed information about the artist: www.art-3gallery.com and <https://www.artsy.net/art-3/artist/linda-karshan>
Please contact ART 3 info@art-3gallery.com for inquiries, images and interview requests

LISTINGS:

What: *Linda Karshan, Signs of Men*
When: March 11-April 5, 2015, Wed-Sat 12-6, Sun 1-6
Opening: Wednesday, March 11, 6-9 PM
Conversation Sunday, March 29, 4-5 PM:
Balance in Determination: Walking with Linda Karshan - Dr. Mark McDonald, Curator of Prints at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in conversation with Linda Karshan
Where: ART 3 Gallery, 109 Ingraham Street, Brooklyn, NY 11237
Transportation: L train to Morgan Avenue; front of the train; walk two blocks
Admission: free
More information: www.art-3gallery.com



Linda Karshan's drawing in her London studio, still from video by Candida Richardson, *Movements, and their Images*, 2009
© Candida Richardson



Linda Karshan, *IV 8/1/14*, from the series *Summer Drawings*, 2014, charcoal on paper, 30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm)