

SKARSTEDT PRESENTS**GEORGE CONDO:
*DOUBLE HEADS / BLACK PAINTINGS / ABSTRACTIONS*****On View: November 8 – December 20
Opening Reception: November 8, 6-8pm**

(New York, NY) October 20, 2014— Skarstedt is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by George Condo titled *Double Heads / Black Paintings / Abstractions*, featuring large-scale paintings created in 2014 at his East Hampton studio.

Condo's *Double Heads* and *Black Paintings* continue his investigation of the concept of portraiture. In these most recent works, Condo has adopted Harold Rosenberg's idea of 'action painting'— a term used to describe the performative, often volatile energy exercised by Abstract Expressionist painters like de Kooning and Pollock—to create his own 'action portraits.' Through an elaborate process of layering, erasure, and reconstruction, shattered images of faces and bodies emerge from and interact within a field of abstract forms.

Incorporating the use of silver metallic paint in *Double Portrait in Grisaille on Silver*, 2014, and other works in this series, Condo references Warhol's silver paintings from the 1960's such as *Double Elvis*. After preparing a ground of silver paint on canvas, Condo applies ivory black onto loose sheets of paper, which is then transferred onto the canvasses, giving them the look and surface quality of a screen print. He then creates a schism in this form by subsequently employing the traditional technique of grisaille to draw out the figures by hand.

In creating such large-scale paintings in a very confined studio space, Condo has been forced to work 'inside' his paintings, addressing both subject and material at close range—never stepping too

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far back from the canvas to allow the image in his mind to entirely materialize. Both gestural improvisation and concrete imagery are evident as he forcefully pushes and pulls the paint around the surface of the canvas until a final image emerges, fully formed yet haunted by the process of its becoming. In *Beginnings*, 2014, a large square format painting, a single eye peers out from the devastation of what at one time might have been a full portrait. This process of addition, subtraction and layering evokes a visceral response to both the handling of paint and the subject of the painting.

Partially obscured by violent brush marks, the likenesses of the figures and characters in Condo's paintings are integrations of forms that the brushwork fractures. Facial features peek out from underneath fields of color as broad strokes of bold black and white paint shatter the pictorial plane. The simultaneous multiple expressions of his portraits speak to the volatility of human emotions and the unpredictability—even hilarity—of the characters one encounters in urban life.

The abstract works in this exhibition fluctuate between the lyrical and the hysterical, building upon the cacophony of interacting forms for which Condo is known. In *Silver Mass*, 2014, as well as several other works on view, Condo extends the lineage of his series of abstract 'expanding canvasses', which began in the early 1980's, to invent ever new painterly forms and hints of human expression.

Double Heads / Black Paintings / Abstractions will be on view at Skarstedt Chelsea (550 W. 21st Street) from November 8 through December 20, 2014.

About George Condo:

George Condo was born in Concord, New Hampshire, in 1957 and studied Art History and Music Theory at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. He has occupied a prominent position in the art world for close to three decades. Condo's work incorporates multi-layered art historical references ranging from European classicism to American contemporary culture.

His work is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, The Judith Rothschild Foundation, Philadelphia, The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, Tate Gallery, London, Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Ministère de la Culture, Paris, Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain, Paris, DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, and the Doron Sebbag Art Collection, O.R.S. Ltd., Tel Aviv.

The Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. is planning a drawing retrospective of Condo's work for 2017, and in 2015, his work will be the subject of an exhibition at the Berggruen Museum in Berlin.

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About Skarstedt:



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550 West 21st Street
New York NY 10011



23 Old Bond Street
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Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980's and early 1990's. The New York gallery's program focuses on artists of the late Twentieth Century whose work explores concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Skarstedt opened its London space at 23 Old Bond Street in 2012 with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. Skarstedt London presents exhibitions and publications devoted to the gallery's established area of expertise while also seeking to evolve and expand its focus. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach through high-quality exhibitions and collaborations with top international museums and private collections.

Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21st Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition *Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings*, adding to the gallery's existing locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. The additional gallery space enables Skarstedt to expand on its core program of museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, John Baldessari, Georg Baselitz, George Condo, Carroll Dunham, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Günther Förg, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Robert Mapplethorpe, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Andy Warhol, Franz West, and Christopher Wool.

Image Credit: George Condo, *Beginnings*, 2014, acrylic, charcoal, pastel on linen, 80 x 76 in (203.2 x 193 cm).

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