

# SKARSTEDT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*THE AMERICAN LINE*

**OPENING RECEPTION**  
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 6-8 PM**  
550 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street



Skarstedt is pleased to announce *The American Line*, an exhibition of paintings, photographs, sculptures and installations by ten American artists, made over the past five decades. Through a variety of means, the exhibition interrogates our many understandings of the line, both in formal terms, and in regard to national borders, as well as artistic lineage. *The American Line* will be on view from February 25 – April 22 at Skarstedt's Chelsea gallery.

*The American Line* unites a group of disparate, yet interconnected artists through their formal use of the geometric line in their work. In doing so, it explores less clear-cut linguistic and art historical territory. A line, of course, could refer to any number of the following: a narrow path, bounded by, or exceeding beyond points on either end; an intergenerational group, linked by culture or influence; the borders of a country or other geographic region; the punch at the end of a joke. In using such a specific, yet shifting element to structure an exhibition, Skarstedt proposes fresh ways of considering the artistic output of some of the country's most acclaimed contemporary artists.



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Two of the earliest pieces in the show serve as points of departure, not only for this exhibition, but for much of contemporary art. In the front gallery, Sol Lewitt's *Wall Drawing 78* (1971) harkens back to the heyday of minimalism and conceptualism. In tight conversation is Paul McCarthy's *Face Painting – Floor, White Line* (1972/1974), a photographic diptych; the first image shows the artist dragging his prostate body along a sand-covered patch of the floor, the second is of the resulting trench. By responding to the more solemn aspects of performance art and land art with an absurd, self-deprecating gesture, McCarthy lampoons an often staid moment in art history while prefiguring his later work.

Richard Prince rebrands the minimalist aesthetic of these two works with his idiosyncratic brand of Americana. His *Untitled (band)* (2016) mimics the cool heroics of geometric abstraction with quotidian materials: rubber bands, and staples. This scaling-up of slight materiality defines a 1991 work by Fred Sandback, comprising five vertical lines of yarn which slice through the gallery floor to ceiling, asserting in their minor presence a surrounding absence. Sculpture by Liz Larner also makes much of negative space, shuffling it among groupings of interconnected, multicolored bronze cubes mounted on white plinths.

Keith Haring's painting from 1984 finds his frenetic line work and circulatory compositions pared down into a charged composition of social critique, produced during the heart of the Culture War. The viewer's eye darts around the surface with the same speed as Haring's hand. A strictly formal read of Haring's work discredits it; his brief but prodigious career was defined not only by his radical meld of graffiti and Pop, but by his use of urban architecture, specifically subway lines, and his attention to social issues of the inner city ranging from gun violence to the AIDS crisis. Similarly, Sue Williams imbues her bright, effervescent canvases with submerged hints of sexually charged subject matter.

Tangential and unexpected, the relationships between the artists in this wide-ranging exhibition are best visualized by Lawrence Weiner's wall mural *PUSHED FORWARD CLOSE BY PUSHED ASIDE CLOSE BY WITH GRACEFUL HASTE* (2009)—two thoughts, separate yet related, connected by a line.

Exhibited artists include: Jean-Michel Baquiat, Keith Haring, Liz Larner, Sol LeWitt, Paul McCarthy, Richard Prince, Fred Sandback, Lawrence Weiner, Christopher Wool and Sue Williams

## About Skarstedt

Skarstedt (20 E. 79<sup>th</sup> 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 1980s and early 1990s. 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.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt's new London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James's, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry



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Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as ‘ministerial street’ in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.

Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21<sup>st</sup> 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, Georg Baselitz, Jean-Michel Basquiat, George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and Christopher Wool.

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Image Credit: Paul McCarthy, *Face Painting - Floor, White Line*, 1972. Performance, video, photographic series. Videography by Mike Cram © Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth