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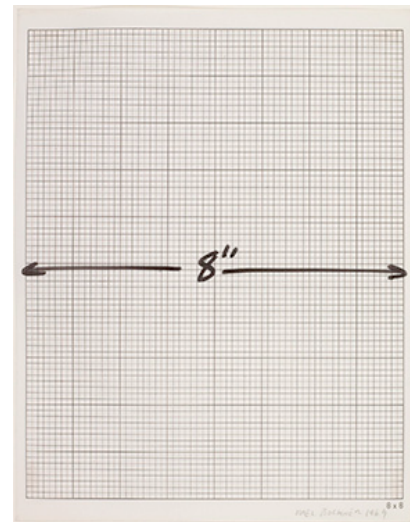
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**ART INSTITUTE EXHIBITION SHOWCASES MORE THAN 120  
CONTEMPORARY DRAWINGS FROM THE IRVING STENN JR. COLLECTION**  
**Featuring Exceptional Works by Johns, Kelly, LeWitt, Judd, and More**  
**Exhibition On View November 19, 2011–February 26, 2012**

In only a decade, Chicago lawyer **Irving Stenn Jr.** has built a collection of more than 170 seminal drawings by more than 90 artists, a collection that focuses on the paradigm-shifting 1960s.

This era saw a radical change in the way in which works on paper were made, used, and appreciated, and for the first time the public will be able to see this foundational moment in the history of drawing as represented through Stenn's singular sensibility. ***Contemporary Drawings from the Irving Stenn Jr. Collection*** will be on view **November 19, 2011** through **February 26, 2012** in the **Jean and Steven Goldman Prints and Drawings Galleries in the Richard and Mary L. Gray**

**Wing (Galleries 124–127)** of the Art Institute of Chicago. This illustrative and exceptional exhibition includes more than 120 works by Mel Bochner, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden, and Fred Sandback, as well as pieces by Agnes Denes, Eva Hesse, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Nam June Paik, and Ellsworth Kelly. More than 100 drawings are promised gifts to the museum—drawings that not only showcase Stenn's personal taste, vision, and passion as a collector but also offer a window into an era when artists reconsidered and reinvented the medium of drawing.



Stenn is a longtime collector who began building an impressive collection of contemporary painting and sculpture with his wife, Marcia, in 1971. Determined to continue adding to the collection after his wife passed away in 1999, he shifted his focus to drawings. The sense of process and intimacy they suggest greatly appealed to Stenn. Drawings can illustrate an artist's course of thought and method of work, and they are often filled with humor and wit not necessarily evident in larger works. Further, their small scale allows more of them to be on display, an important point for Stenn, who actually lives with his entire collection on view in his home. The relatively recent vintage of these drawings has also allowed Stenn to develop close personal relationships within the artistic community—including his friendship with Mel Bochner—which has provided him in turn with an even deeper understanding of the broader sweep of art history.

Though Stenn did not set out with strict parameters for the collection, he was drawn to works from the 1960s and enjoyed tracing influences to earlier pieces, including those by Marija Ender and Suprematist Kazimir Malevich, works that are included in the exhibition. The resulting body of work makes visible a definitive shift in artists' approach to drawings. While continuing the early modern practice of making drawings as finite expressions in their own right, innovators of the 1960s employed drawing in ways previously not considered art—as diagrams, instructions for fabrication, caprices suggesting movement in performance, or markers of space and time. Drawings enabled spatial and tactile perception to be recorded and conceptual concerns of a larger project to be explored. These ideas found their best expression in the grid, which forms a subtle backdrop to the exhibition; over 35 works in the collection have graph paper supports, and many more consist of a grid or are rendered in a grid structure.

The exhibition is thus nearly a primer on the ways in which drawings were tied into and helped to shape art movements of the 1960s, such as Minimalism and Conceptual art, from some of these movements' greatest practitioners. Viewers are able to see the legacy of Malevich's *Black Square*, *Second State* of 1915/20 through to the explorations of James Turrell, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Ryman. Line is as important as the grid; the repetitive marks of Robert Morris, the delicacy of Agnes Martin, and the exuberance of León Ferrari and Cy Twombly are all testaments to the versatility of the medium and the investigative nature of the artists featured as they worked with elemental forms and means. Through this exhibition viewers are also able to see many of the works in the permanent collection in a new light, including Robert Smithson's *Chalk-Mirror Displacement*, Ed Ruscha's word paintings, Agnes Martin's canvases, and the museum's recent acquisition *Painterly Realism of a Football Player—Color Masses in the 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension* by Kazimir Malevich.

The rich array of drawings in the Irving Stenn Jr. collection makes clear the enduring vitality and importance of drawing. *Contemporary Drawings from the Irving Stenn Jr. Collection* affords visitors to the Art Institute a close inspection and appreciation of the continuing significance of the drawing in the arts and a glimpse into a foundational private collection.

*Contemporary Drawings from the Irving Stenn Jr. Collection* is accompanied by a handsome 160-page catalogue published by the Art Institute of Chicago and distributed by Yale University Press. *Contemporary Drawings from the Irving Stenn Jr. Collection*, edited by Mark Pascale, curator in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago, will be available November 11, 2011 at the Art Institute's Museum Shop for \$35.

### **About Irving Stenn Jr.**

Irving Stenn Jr. is an attorney in private practice in downtown Chicago. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, from which he also received his law degree in 1955. He is a life trustee and Honorary Governing Member of the Art Institute of Chicago and serves on the Committee for Prints and Drawings and the Committee for Contemporary Art. The Irving Stenn Jr. Family Gallery, on the second floor of the Modern Wing, is named in his honor.

*Contemporary Drawings from the Irving Stenn Jr. Collection* is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and curated by Mark Pascale, curator in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute.

IMAGE: Mel Bochner. *8" Measurement*, 1969. Promised gift of the Irving Stenn Jr. Drawings Collection. With permission of the artist.

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#### **MUSEUM HOURS**

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday

10:30 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

**Museum free to Illinois residents on first and second Wednesdays of every month.**

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

#### **ADMISSION**

Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions

Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions  
Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency  
Children under 14 always free  
Members always free

**City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.**