Press Release

William Wegman:

2024

February 17 – June 22, 2024

Dog Walker, 1990.

Alta is thrilled to announce a solo exhibition of a stunning collection of 20 x 24 Polaroids by the celebrated American artist William Wegman.

"2024", reflects the year of the exhibition and the 20 x 24 Polaroid size. This serendipitous connection highlights the extraordinary opportunity for collectors to own a piece of photographic history as Polaroids are unique, one of a kind.

By appointment only.

In 1979, William Wegman was invited by the Polaroid Corporation to work with the recently developed 20 x 24 Polaroid camera.

Inspired by this new medium, Wegman made some of his first color photographs, continuing his collaboration with his dog Man Ray who had been central to Wegman's 1970s black and white photographs and video work.

Wegman continued to work extensively with the 20 x 24 Polaroid camera until 2007 when Polaroid stopped producing film. In over 30 years of working with this camera, Wegman explored a rich and wide range of themes from abstraction and anthropomorphism to surrealism, cubism and color theory.

Each new dog suggests new ideas and new ways of working. Fay Ray followed Man Ray in 1987 and her children and their children provided a large and ongoing cast of characters.

William Wegman was born in 1943 in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

He received a B.F.A. in painting from the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston in 1965 and an M.F.A. in painting from the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana in 1967.

Wegman's work has been exhibited in museums and galleries internationally and was included in such seminal exhibitions as "When Attitudes Become Form," at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969 and "Documenta V" in Kassel in 1972.

In Long Beach Wegman got his first dog, a Weimaraner who he named Man Ray, and began a long and fruitful collaboration. Man Ray, known in the art world and beyond for his endearing deadpan presence, became a central figure in Wegman's photographs and videotapes.

When Man Ray died in 1982 he was named "Man of the Year" by the Village Voice. It was not until 1986 that Wegman got a new dog, Fay Ray, and another collaboration began marked by Wegman's extensive use of the Polaroid 20 x 24 camera.

With the birth of Fay's litter in 1989, Wegman's cast of grew to include Fay's offspring – Battina, Crooky and Chundo – and later, their offspring: Battina's son Chip in 1995, Chip's son Bobbin in 1999 and Candy and Bobbin's daughter Penny in 2004.

Wegman has also published a number of books for adults including Man's Best Friend, Fashion Photographs, William Wegman 20 x 24, The New York Times Bestseller Puppies, Fay, William Wegman: Paintings, Being Human, and William Wegman: Writing by Artist edited by Andrew Lampert.

Numerous retrospectives of Wegman's work have toured Europe, Asia and the United States including: "Wegman's World," at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis in 1981; "William Wegman: Paintings, Drawings, Photographs, Videotapes," which opened at the Kunstmuseum, Lucerne in 1990 and traveled to venues across Europe and the United States including the Centre Pompidou, Paris and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; "Funney/Strange" which opened at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 2006 and made its final stop at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus in the fall of 2007 and "Hello Nature" which opened at the Bowdoin Museum of Art in 2012 and travelled to Artipelag in Stockholm, Sweden.

Recent museum exhibitions have included "Before/On/After: William Wegman and California Conceptualism" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and "Being Human," a large scale survey of over thirty years of Wegman's photographic work which began a four year international tour after opening at the Rencontres d'Arles in the summer of 2018.

William Wegman lives in New York and Maine where he continues to paint, draw, make videos and take photographs with his dog Flo.

The Line About, 2004.

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