

The Drawing Center

For Immediate Release

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THE DRAWING CENTER ANNOUNCES

Ree Morton: At the Still Point of the Turning World

Main Gallery and Drawing Room

September 18 – December 18, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 17, 2009 6–8pm



Ree Morton, *Untitled (Repetition Series)*, 1970. Pencil on paper, 14 x 10 inches. Estate of Ree Morton, Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York and Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zürich.

New York, September 9, 2009 – The Drawing Center is pleased to announce an exhibition of drawing-based works by the late American artist Ree Morton (1936–1977), on view in the Main Gallery and Drawing Room from September 18 – December 18, 2009. *Ree Morton: At the Still Point of the Turning World* highlights Morton’s influential body of work, remarkably all produced in a single decade between her decision to turn to art full-time in the late 1960s and her tragic death in an automobile accident in 1977, shortly before her 41st birthday. While reflecting many of the currents of post-Minimal art of the 1970s, Morton’s work also looked to a pioneering use of personal narrative, intimacy, humor, and poetic imagination. Yet the scope of her artistic production remains largely unrecognized, as does her vital contribution to feminist art practice and the importance of drawing to her development as an artist. The exhibition is comprised of a selection of early drawings, several of which will be on view for the first time, along with major drawing-based sculptural works and a selection of notebook sketches. *Ree Morton: At the Still Point of the Turning World* is curated by João

Ribas, taking its title from a T. S. Eliot poem Morton kept above her studio desk.

Through drawings, drawing-based installations, and early sketchbooks, Morton moves from the austerity of conceptual art towards an interest in process and personal narrative—part of the artist’s wish was to be “light and ironic on serious subjects without frivolity.” Her early work reveals a literary artist of prodigious curiosity and inventiveness, who attempted to reconcile Americana and kitsch with conceptual rigor and formal concision of Minimalism, as well as now-prevalent notions of narrative and autobiography. An

attention to the texture of language rooted in drawing allowed Morton to bridge personal content with the precision of formal abstraction; repetitive minimal forms lead to more narrative modes of mark-making, ranging from abstracted diagrams to cartoonish illustrations—all united by Morton’s defining sense of personal, political, and emotional investment.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ree Morton was born in Ossining, New York, in 1936 and died tragically in a car accident in 1977 in Chicago. Turning to art relatively late in her life, she first studied nursing, then married and had three children before completing her BFA at the University of Rhode Island in 1968. She went on to complete her MFA at Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, in 1970, and in 1975, was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant. During her lifetime, her work was exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Artists Space; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; as well as galleries in New York and Chicago. She was the subject of a posthumous retrospective at The New Museum in 1980, and a 1985 solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Morton’s work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions, including *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967–1975* (organized by Independent Curators International), which traveled to the Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC; American University Museum, Washington, DC; National Academy Museum, New York; and Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2006–2008) and the 2007 exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, which was on view at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; and The Vancouver Art Gallery, BC. Morton was also the subject of a recent solo exhibition, *The Deities Must be Made to Laugh, Works 1971-1977*, on view from December 12, 2008 – March 1, 2009 at Generali Foundation in Vienna.



Ree Morton, *Trumpet Weed*, 1974. Crayon and colored pencil on paper, 22 x 30 inches (55.9 x 76.2 cm). Courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift 2005.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

As part of **SoHo Night on Thursday, September 24**, Assistant Curator **Rachel Liebowitz** will give an exhibition tour of the Main Gallery at **6:30pm** and the Drawing Room at **7:30pm**.

Curator **João Ribas** will give a **free gallery talk** about the exhibition on **Saturday, October 24** at **4pm**.

A **video screening** of *Ree Morton: An Interview* (1974) will be held on **Thursday, December 10** at **6:30pm**.

PUBLICATIONS

In conjunction with the exhibition, The Drawing Center will publish *Drawing Papers 87: Ree Morton: At the Still Point of the Turning World* featuring a roundtable conversation with Drawing Center curator João Ribas, independent curator Allan Schwartzman, and MoMA chief curator of drawings Cornelia H. Butler, as well as Lucy Lippard’s 1973 essay “At the Still Point of the Turning World,” with a new introduction to the text by Lippard. The publication will be approximately 120 pages with 50 color images, and will be available for sale in September.

HOURS & ACCESSIBILITY

Gallery hours are Wednesday, 12 pm to 6 pm, Thursday, 12 pm to 8 pm, and Friday – Sunday, 12 pm to 6 pm (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). The Drawing Center is wheelchair accessible.

CREDITS

This exhibition is made possible by The Henry Luce Foundation. Additional support is provided by The Judith Rothschild Foundation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Drawing Center is the only not-for-profit fine arts institution in the county to focus solely on the exhibition of drawings, both historical and contemporary. It was established in 1977 to provide opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists; to demonstrate the significance and diversity of drawings throughout history; and to stimulate public dialogue on issues of art and culture.

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