

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAJOR EXHIBITION OF RECENT PRINTS AND SCULPTURE
TO GO ON VIEW AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. NOVEMBER 6, 1984. Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration, which goes on view at the National Gallery of Art's East Building from November 18, 1984 through February 24, 1985, celebrates the achievement of one of the most important and influential printmaking workshops and art publishers in the United States -- Gemini G.E.L. [Graphic Editions Limited].

Thirty-one artists are represented by 110 works plus numerous working drawings, trial proofs, and other preliminary material. The exhibition presents a survey of Gemini's diverse publications, drawn from the Gemini G.E.L. Archive established at the National Gallery in 1981. The contemporary artists Robert Rauschenberg, Ellsworth Kelly, David Hockney, Jasper Johns, Sam Francis, and Roy Lichtenstein are represented in sections focusing specifically on their work. Among the artists included are also Frank Stella, Claes Oldenburg, Isamu Noguchi, Richard Diebenkorn, James Rosenquist, and Jonathan Borofsky.

In this exhibition and accompanying catalogue, curator Ruth E. Fine of the Gallery's Department of Prints and Drawings not only examines the works of art produced by artists at Gemini G.E.L., but also explores in depth for the first time the process of collaboration that is an essential component of the creative efforts at Gemini.

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Gemini was established in Los Angeles in 1966 and has published more than eleven hundred works of art to date, including edition prints and sculpture as well as monoprints and one-of-a-kind dimensional pieces. From an early emphasis on lithography, Gemini has expanded into screenprinting, etching, and the woodcut (often combining several processes in a single print), as well as the production of edition sculpture. The versatility of the work resulting from collaboration at Gemini, in which the ideas of artists are joined with the expertise of imaginative technicians and craftsmen, reflects the history of printmaking over the past two decades.

Beginning with Albers' White Line Squares (1966) (Gemini's first major undertaking), the exhibition traces the development of the shop to the present time. Artists at work in the late sixties and early seventies focused their attention on issues of technique and scale. Highlights from these first years include Robert Rauschenberg's Booster (1967); Frank Stella's Double Gray Scramble (1972-1973), a screenprint so complex that it required one hundred and fifty runs to complete each image; and Claes Oldenburg's outsize objects from everyday life such as Ice Bag (1971) and Soft Screw (1976).

The second part of the show reflects the diversity of artists' concerns during the 1970s. Fourteen works by as many artists are on view, among them lithographs by Philip Guston and Robert Motherwell, and a cast pewter sculpture by Willem de Kooning.

On view in the six sections of the exhibition devoted to individual artists are: Pages and Fuses (1973-1974) by Robert Rauschenberg; Ellsworth Kelly's Painted Wall Sculptures (1981-1982); David Hockney's captivating portraits of friends from the worlds of art and literature; Four Panels from Untitled 1972 (1973-1975) by Jasper Johns; Indigo Wood (1984) by Sam Francis; and Roy Lichtenstein's printed images of paintings, his "Painting" Series (1984).

The exhibition closes with works from the 1980s, a period in which Gemini has collaborated for the first time with Jonathan Borofsky, Isamu Noguchi, and Richard Diebenkorn. Recent sculpture by Mark di Suvero, Richard Serra, and Edward Kienholz will be on view, as well as new prints by James Rosenquist, Michael Heizer, Edward Ruscha, and Dorothea Rockburne.

In addition to a general history of Gemini, the exhibition catalogue contains detailed entries on each work, biographies of individual artists, and an extensive bibliography by Lamia Doumato, reference librarian at the National Gallery. An essay, entitled "Print Workshops at Mid-Century," has been contributed by Bruce Davis, associate curator of prints and drawings at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. All works in the exhibition are illustrated in color; approximately 100 documentary photographs of the artists at work are also included. The catalogue has been co-published with Abbeville Press, Inc.

After its premiere at the National Gallery, Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration will be on view at the Seattle Art Museum; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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