

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER

The Desert

November 8 – December 22, 2012

Opening Reception: November 8th from 6-8pm

David Nolan Gallery is proud to announce an exhibition of thirty recent pastel on paper landscape drawings by Richard Artschwager (American, b. 1923). This will be the artist's seventh exhibition with the gallery. The show opens on November 8 and will run through December 22, 2012.

Richard Artschwager is undoubtedly one of the most important artists to emerge in America during the modern postwar era. His enigmatic works defy easy categorization and have influenced generations of younger artists through his ability to show us the symbolic power of ordinary things. He arrived in New York in the late 1940's after serving in World War II and studied with the French Cubist painter, Amédée Ozenfant. A fledgling art critic named Donald Judd saw Artschwager's paintings and drawings of landscapes in a gallery on Madison Avenue in 1959 and, several years later, Artschwager exhibited at the famed Leo Castelli Gallery where he showed alongside Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Claes Oldenburg.

Artschwager's landscape drawings will be a focus of the exhibition. Artschwager's family moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico when he was a child because of his father's poor health, and the desert landscape made a lasting impression. Noted throughout his career for his cool detachment and gray palette, these landscapes represent the most subjective of the artist's oeuvre, rendered in brilliant colors. Artschwager returned many times to New Mexico as an adult, still captivated by the endless roads, craggy terrain, and desert shrubs. He portrays the scenery from many different perspectives—from an airplane, atop an outlook, from the middle of the road. Over the years, the vernacular of the New Mexican landscape became as important to his work as southern California was for Ed Ruscha, another member of Castelli's stable of artists.

In 2008, Alexi Worth wrote this about Artschwager's desert scenes:

In the recent drawings, the master of faux furniture and monochrome interiors has gone outdoors, into a kind of high-chroma farmland of the mind. Tabletops have become fields. Bands have become highways. The "blps" and spuds of earlier drawings are now watermelons, ornamented with radiant green mottling that seems to reprise the fields where they grew. Garishly beautiful and ebullient, these pastoral hallucinations hark back to the horizontal line drawings of the late sixties, and beyond them, to Artschwager's earliest exhibited work: the abstract landscapes that Donald Judd admired back in 1959, with their "quick, spiked strokes,... communicative of abbreviation." For the artist himself, they look back even further, to the New Mexico of the 1930s, where he spent his teenage years. Their subject is, as he put it with typically laconic candor: "Homesickness. Which continues."

We are very pleased to present this exhibition concurrently with Artschwager's first retrospective in New York since 1987, on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art from October 25 – February 5, 2013.