

ORDOVAS

**PRESS RELEASE
UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL
9AM 15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

25 Savile Row
London W1S 2ER
T. +44 (0) 7287 5013

Gallery Hours:
Tue-Fri: 10:00-18:00
Sat: 11:00-15:00



ARTISTS AND LOVERS

LONDON: 16 SEPTEMBER – 29 OCTOBER 2016
NEW YORK: NOVEMBER 2016 - JANUARY 2017

Artists and Lovers will trace a number of the greatest artistic partnerships of the mid-20th century to suggest how love and friendship can shape creative process. The show will be exhibited on Savile Row, London, from 16 September until 29 October 2016, and then travel to Ordovas' outpost gallery space on New York's Upper East Side from early November 2016, until end of January 2017. Presenting a striking selection of sculpture, painting, photography, dance, music and film, the exhibition aims to bring fresh perspective to intriguing and significant artistic alliances, from well-known couples such as Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, to more private artistic pairings, including the long friendship between Joseph Cornell and Yayoi Kusama. **Artists and Lovers** will feature a major Frida Kahlo self-portrait, painted in 1940, and (*Silver Square*), painted by Jackson Pollock circa 1950, a work that was hung for many years in the New York apartment of Pollock's wife and fellow Abstract Expressionist, Lee Krasner. Works by Kay Sage and Yves Tanguy; Max Ernst, Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning; Elaine and Willem de Kooning; Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly and Jasper Johns; Merce Cunningham and John Cage and Donald Judd and Laurotta Vinciarelli will also be displayed in this free, public exhibition.

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) first met Diego Rivera (1886-1957) when she was an art student hoping to get advice from the famous Mexican muralist. Although Rivera was married, and twenty years Kahlo's senior, a courtship ensued. They wed in 1929, but with their volatile tempers and countless infidelities, the marriage was notoriously tumultuous. The couple divorced in 1939 only to remarry a year later, and the second marriage was just as turbulent as the first. Shortly after their remarriage both artists were commissioned to paint self-portraits by the American engineer Sigmund Firestone for the sum of \$500. Kahlo's painting, *Autorretrato*, shows her wearing pre-Columbian jewellery with the typical Catholic covering of the head, pointing to the duality of her roots, as well as the duality of her country. In a 1940 letter written to Firestone, Kahlo assured him that Rivera would start his self-portrait as soon as he had finished the murals he was working on. Later, once his self-portrait was finished she wrote again to tell Firestone that: "...we will be together again on your wall, as a symbol of our remarriage". *Autorretrato* was last exhibited in London as part of Tate Modern's major retrospective in 2005, and has not been publicly displayed in the U.S. since 1983. The painting will be shown alongside a photograph of Diego Rivera from the same period.

Kay Sage (1898-1963) and Yves Tanguy (1900-1955) had seen and admired each other's work in the 1930s before they met. A relationship soon ensued and they lived and worked together in Paris for several years before moving to the United States, and marrying in Nevada in 1940. Surrealist contemporaries in Paris never really accepted Sage into their close-knit brotherhood but in the United States, Sage found recognition, both critically and among her peers. The relationship between Tanguy and Sage is as enigmatic as their art. It is said that they preferred to work independently

Jackson Pollock, (*Silver Square*), executed circa 1950 (left); Lee Krasner, *Mister Blue*, painted in 1966 (right)

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of each other and yet the similarities in terms of style and subject matter are undeniable in many cases. Sage's *Midnight Street*, painted in 1944 and Tanguy's *Je te retrouve objet trouvé*, painted in 1938, are dark brooding canvases populated by unrecognisable architectural forms.

English-born Mexican artist, Surrealist painter and novelist Leonora Carrington OBE (1917-2011) first met the German Surrealist Max Ernst (1891-1976) in London in 1937. The artists travelled together to Paris, at which point Ernst separated from his first wife, Marie-Berthe Aurenche. In 1938, leaving Paris, Carrington and Ernst settled in Saint Martin d'Ardèche, a small commune in Southern France. Here, the new couple collaborated and supported each other's artistic development, each creating sculptures of guardian animals with which to decorate their new home. *La Horde*, painted by Max Ernst in 1927 before meeting Carrington, and *Composition*, an oil on canvas painted by Carrington in 1950—long after she and Ernst had separated—demonstrate the hybrid world, half fantastical and half recognisable, that fascinated both artists throughout their careers, before, during and after their relationship, and permeated their vivid and, at times, playful paintings.

Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012) first met Max Ernst at a party in 1942. Later he called into her studio to consider her work for an all female exhibition at 'The Art of This Century' gallery, which was owned by his then wife, Peggy Guggenheim. They lived in New York for several years before moving to Sedona in Arizona, and then later to France. Tanning was mostly self-taught and although the imagery of her paintings from the 1940s echoed that of artists and writers of the Surrealist Movement, many of whom were close friends, she developed her own individual style over her six decade-long career, moving from Surrealism towards ever increasing abstraction. *L'Enchanteresse (Temptress)*, an oil on canvas painted in 1959, illustrates her maturing style. This work is paired with Ernst's *Temptation of St. Anthony*, painted in 1945, the year before the two were married.

Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929) first met Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) in New York in the 1960s, a time when she was gaining international prominence with her artworks and her performances. Cornell was twenty-six years Kusama's senior and yet the two quickly formed a relationship that she described as passionate yet platonic. Cornell died in 1972, and, greatly affected by his loss, Kusama started a series of works featuring elements of his style including surrealist cutouts, collages and a number of boxes, layered with her signature pattern of polka dots and infinity nets. These works revert back to her earlier interest in organism-like forms, melancholic in tone yet imbued with a sense of calm. Cornell's wooden box construction, *Soap Bubble Set*, executed in 1948, and *Hat*, made by Kusama in 1962, demonstrate the deep aesthetic bond between two bold, yet isolated, visionaries who found solace in each other's friendship and artistic viewpoints.

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Abstract Expressionist artist Elaine de Kooning (née Fried), (1918-1989) was introduced to Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) in 1938 by a mutual friend. Shortly after Willem began to instruct Elaine in drawing and painting in his loft at 156 West 22nd Street, New York, and they later wed in 1943. Elaine promoted Willem's work throughout their long relationship, not only in her role as his model and muse through the 1940s, but also as an important writer, critic, and teacher on art. Willem's tactile bronze sculpture, *Hostess*, executed in 1973, is paired with Elaine de Kooning's *Untitled (Standing Bull)*, a vigorous and riotously coloured canvas painted in 1959, made after a trip she took to the Mexican city of Juarez. Both works were produced during a period when the de Koonings lived apart; despite being separated for nearly twenty years they never divorced, and resumed daily contact in 1978.

Lee Krasner (1908-1984) was one of the founders of the American Abstract Artists group, and it was through this that she met Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) in 1936. Throughout their relationship she helped to guide him towards his signature style and managed his career and estate alike. They married in 1945, moving to The Springs in Long Island a few years later. It was here that Pollock had the legendary barn studio in which he could lay his canvas on the ground and drip paint in his signature style. By contrast, Krasner's studio was upstairs in the house itself. The difference in scale of the studios was reflected in the scale of the pictures—hers were essentially more intimate, which in some ways was more suited to her composed, less gestural style. Lee Krasner's *Mister Blue*, an oil on canvas painted in 1966, will be shown alongside Pollock's (*Silver Square*), oil painted on the rough side of masonite circa 1950, a work which Krasner hung on the wall of her New York apartment for many years, until her death in 1984.

The artistic and personal relationships between composer John Cage (1912-1992), choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009), and the visual artists Cy Twombly (1928-2011), Jasper Johns (b. 1930) and Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) resulted in a number of hugely influential works that each made or collaborated on, in the 1960s, reflecting shared interests and multiple levels of engagement across the disciplines of painting, sculpture, dance and music. In the spirit of sensory adventure, Cage liberated sound from its customary range and order, as demonstrated in the black and white film that he conceived and recorded in 1965 in collaboration with Merce Cunningham, *Variations V*. Twombly let his process of marking run free of external considerations of composition, format, and theme. His marks in *Untitled*, executed in 1961, follow each other rather than some external plan. These gestures are like Cage's sounds, a collection that has grown organically. At work in a related way, Johns broke the semiotic bond between common objects, their graphic signs, and their conventional significations including his grey encaustic work from 1962, *Untitled (Gray Painting with Spoon)*. This work will be displayed alongside Rauschenberg's *Untitled (black painting on paper with collage)*, executed in 1952.

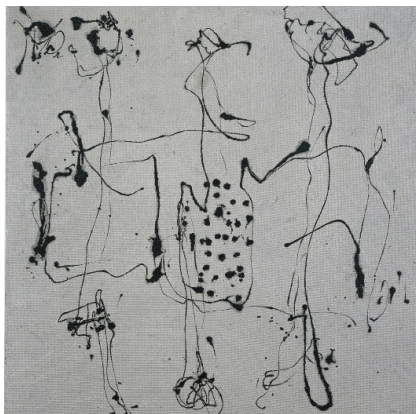
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Lauretta Vinciarelli (1943-2011) was a celebrated member of the architectural avant-garde. She came of age as an artist during the reign of Minimalism, a time when mostly male artists, including Sol Lewitt, Carl Andre and Donald Judd (1928-1994), shifted interest away from traditional painting in favour of the hardness of raw materials and prefabricated objects. Vinciarelli became both a romantic and artistic partner to Judd, and the two lived and worked together for 12 years, both in Judd's super-sized studio and exhibition space in Marfa, West Texas during the 1980s and in the Soho building on Spring Street, now home to the Judd Foundation. During this time, many of Vinciarelli's experimental designs were integral to the formation of Judd's immersive Minimalist art experience in Marfa. Vinciarelli's watercolour, *Pond Water (Study 2)*, painted in 2007, and Donald Judd's *Untitled*, executed in 1973, illustrate the aesthetic exchange between these two artists, despite their very different techniques.

Artists and Lovers will continue in New York, from early November 2016 until mid of January 2017 in our outpost gallery location, a townhouse on the Upper East Side.

About Ordovas

Pilar Ordovas founded her eponymous gallery in 2011 after thirteen years at Christie's, where she was a Chairman for Post-War and Contemporary art in Europe, and two years as a Director of Gagosian Gallery, London. Scholarly in tone, the gallery has staged sixteen museum-level exhibitions in London and, since 2015, in New York, bringing focus to historical works as well as modern masters, from artists including Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon and Alexander Calder, to Alberto Giacometti, Rembrandt and Auguste Rodin. Many works are loaned from private collections to which there is no public access and several exhibitions have been organised in close collaboration with major European institutions including The Courtauld Gallery, London and the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. In the autumn of 2015, Ordovas began its international exhibition program, with an outpost show in New York, *Chillida: Rhythm-Time-Silence* (30 October 2015 – 7 January 2016). This was the first major Eduardo Chillida exhibition on U.S. soil in twenty-five years, and re-introduced the artist's work to a new audience of American art-lovers and collectors. In Spring 2016, Ordovas established a permanent base in New York, opening an office in Tribeca.

Jackson Pollock, (*Silver Square*), executed circa 1950 (left); Lee Krasner, *Mister Blue*, painted in 1966 (right)

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