

RICHARD GRAY GALLERY



Ewan Gibbs, *Chicago*, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ewan Gibbs: New York | Chicago

April 25 - June 29, 2019

Opening reception:

Thursday, April 25, 2019, from 6-8 PM

1018 Madison Avenue, New York

NEW YORK - Richard Gray Gallery is pleased to present *New York | Chicago*, a solo exhibition of drawings by British artist Ewan Gibbs at the gallery's New York location from April 25 to June 29, 2019. *New York | Chicago* will open with a reception for the artist on April 25, 6-8 PM.

Renowned British artist Ewan Gibbs creates intimately scaled portraits of the built environment. Working from photographs taken during his travels, Gibbs carefully renders images of urban landmarks using his methodical drawing technique. The resulting images infuse the iconic manufactured exteriors of the city with an inner nostalgia and demand close observation.

New York | Chicago presents a recent body of work comprising parallel but distinct series of drawings that are based on the artist's personal encounters in the two cities. Each drawing contains thousands of minuscule pen and pencil marks and pinpricks—a system developed by Gibbs over twenty-five years ago after seeing knitting patterns containing various graphic symbols within a large, organized grid. Justly described by the late and celebrated art educator and critic James Yood, “the allure of Gibbs’s maniacally rendered [illustrations] stems from the stunning difficulty of his task, the monklike patience it requires, and the bravura skill he brings to bear.” Upon close inspection, these gestures dissolve into a sea of marks; as the viewer steps back, however, the abstract and the figural converge until the marks snap into focus, revealing the spatial planes of city monuments and quintessential skyline views. This distance-based legibility harkens back to the dotted canvases of the Pointillists, though Gibbs's techniques resonate to an even higher degree with the pixel in photographic technology—with each mark, he records a single elemental unit of the image.

On the occasion of *New York / Chicago*, Gray will release an illustrated catalogue featuring a dialogue between Ewan Gibbs and Richard Shiff, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Director at the Center for the Study of Modernism at the University of Texas, Austin.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ewan Gibbs (British, b. 1973) is known for the meticulously rendered drawings he creates employing a unique visual language he developed several decades ago. While an art student in London looking closely at Pop art and finding intrigue in the found image, the artist happened across a book of knitting patterns. Printed in black and white, the book distilled the composition of a given pattern stitch-by-stitch with various marks (circles, triangles, hatch marks) indicating different colors of yarn. He quickly adapted this knitting shorthand and began making drawings using travel brochures as source material, selecting images in the brochures for their composition and transforming these found photographs, mostly of hotel rooms, into drawings. The resulting images—which Gibbs reads as “equivocal translations rather than equivalent transcriptions”—are identifiable at a distance, but abstract and fleeting up close.

The artist expanded his source material in the following years, beginning to make drawings after his own photographs. He continues to choose Pop subjects for his drawings—often architectural landmarks in major cities, the types of images that might be found in any tourist guidebook—in an effort to make the work less about the particular subject he has selected than about how the image is produced through his unique mark-making system. Among the numerous subjects he has chosen are hotel interiors and facades, sports figures, and the cities of London, Paris, San Francisco, New York, and Chicago.

Gibbs received his BFA from Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 1996. His drawings are included in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Tate Gallery, London; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard; the Hammer Museum, UCLA; and the Denver Art Museum, among others. He was invited to create the visual identity for the 2009 Armory Show, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art commissioned him to create a suite of eighteen drawings on the occasion of the museum's 75th anniversary in 2010. Gibbs lives and works in Oxfordshire, England.

UPCOMING FROM RICHARD GRAY GALLERY

Frieze New York, May 2-5, 2019

Art Basel, June 13-16, 2019

For press inquiries, please contact Becky Daniel, 312/642.8877, bd@richardgraygallery.com

Richard Gray Gallery, New York is open 11 AM - 5 PM, Tuesday – Saturday

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