

# DRAWINGS

## ALLAN McCOLLUM

October 20 – November 19, 2011



Allan McCollum. *Drawings*, 1989-91. Pencil on museum board, each unique.  
Installation: Centre d' Art Contemporain, Geneva

JGM. Galerie is pleased to announce its new exhibition of the *Drawings* series (1989) by the American artist Allan McCollum from 21 October to 19 November.

Since the 70s, Allan McCollum has been developing mass production systems that have enabled him to analyse and critically assess the status of the work of art. Artistic production is traditionally defined by its rareness or uniqueness, but McCollum produces art exponentially to the point of imitating industrial production. As the artist explains, "Artists seem to have just accepted without question that it's their calling to produce rare objects – objects for exclusive use. This seems to me

to be the reason that avant-garde activity is isolated from the people at large.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, *Surrogate Paintings* (1978), *Plaster Surrogates* (1982) and *Individual Works* (1987), up until his most recent series, *The Shapes Project* (since 2005), are all series that bring together vast collections of hundreds, thousands and sometimes even billions of objects. In his introduction to *The Shapes Project*, the artist writes, “This system allows me to make enough unique shapes for every person on the planet to have one of the shapes. It also allows me to keep track of them, so as to insure that no two will ever be alike.” This last point is one of the paradoxes of McCollum’s seriality – although his series are produced en masse, this does not prevent each of the works from being unique. Thus on the one hand there is an institutional criticism of art, and on the other hand a rejection of the standardisation of objects of consumption in daily life.

The *Drawings* series was the first step in the process that led to Allan McCollum’s titanic work entitled *The Shapes Project*. This series was begun in 1989 and constitutes around five thousands of drawings of black abstract shapes on a white background. From a collection of templates designed by the artist, around twenty assistants produced by hand hundreds of variations and distortions in order to obtain a multitude of drawings that are never repeated. Each drawing in the series is therefore a unique work. Here the mass becomes a collection of unique items, which differ from each other only by minute variations. This series was first exhibited at the John Weber Gallery in New York in 1989. It was then shown in several institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1992, the Centre d’art Contemporain in Geneva in 1993 and the Musée d’Art Moderne in Lille Métropole in 1998. JGM. Galerie is exhibiting this series for the first time in Paris. It is an opportunity for the Parisian public to see the work of Allan McCollum again after his last personal exhibition in 1990!

Today, the works of Allan McCollum feature in the collections of some of the largest galleries in the world such as the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Musée d’art Moderne et Contemporain in Geneva (Switzerland), the Castello di Rivoli (Italy), etc.

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<sup>1</sup> “Allan McCollum interviewed by Thomas Lawson”, 1992, original publication A.R.T. Press, Los Angeles, 1996