



ED PASCHKE

D R A W I N G S

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The exhibition "Ed Paschke: Drawings from Chicago Collections" was held at The Art Institute of Chicago from October 10, 1990, to January 2, 1991.

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Cover:

31 **UNTITLED (PAREJA)**, 1990

The Art Institute of Chicago, Restricted gift of Carol and Douglas Cohen
Photograph by William H. Bengtson
Courtesy of Phyllis Kind Gallery, Inc.

ED PASCHKE

D R A W I N G S

FROM CHICAGO COLLECTIONS

Exhibition organized by:

**DOUGLAS W. DRUICK
AND KEVIN SHARP**

Special Consultant:

ROBERT H. BERGMAN

Catalogue essay by:

DENNIS ADRIAN

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO



The Department of Prints and Drawings at The Art Institute of Chicago is pleased to take part in the museum's ambitious retrospective devoted to the paintings of Ed Paschke. We have organized a complementary exhibition that features drawings from Chicago collections representative of the full range of Paschke's career and talent. This exhibition of drawings illuminates Paschke's practice as a painter, while focusing attention on a lesser-known aspect of his work whose significance, in turn, is underscored by the context of the paintings exhibition.

The desire to illustrate Paschke's production by exhibiting painted and graphic work in close proximity reflects the museum's larger commitment to creating an integrated picture of artistic practice in the presentation of its collections. Provided with the opportunity to study Paschke's oeuvre as both painter and draughtsman, the visitor will hopefully come away with a fuller understanding of the diversity and complexity of Paschke's artistic enterprise.

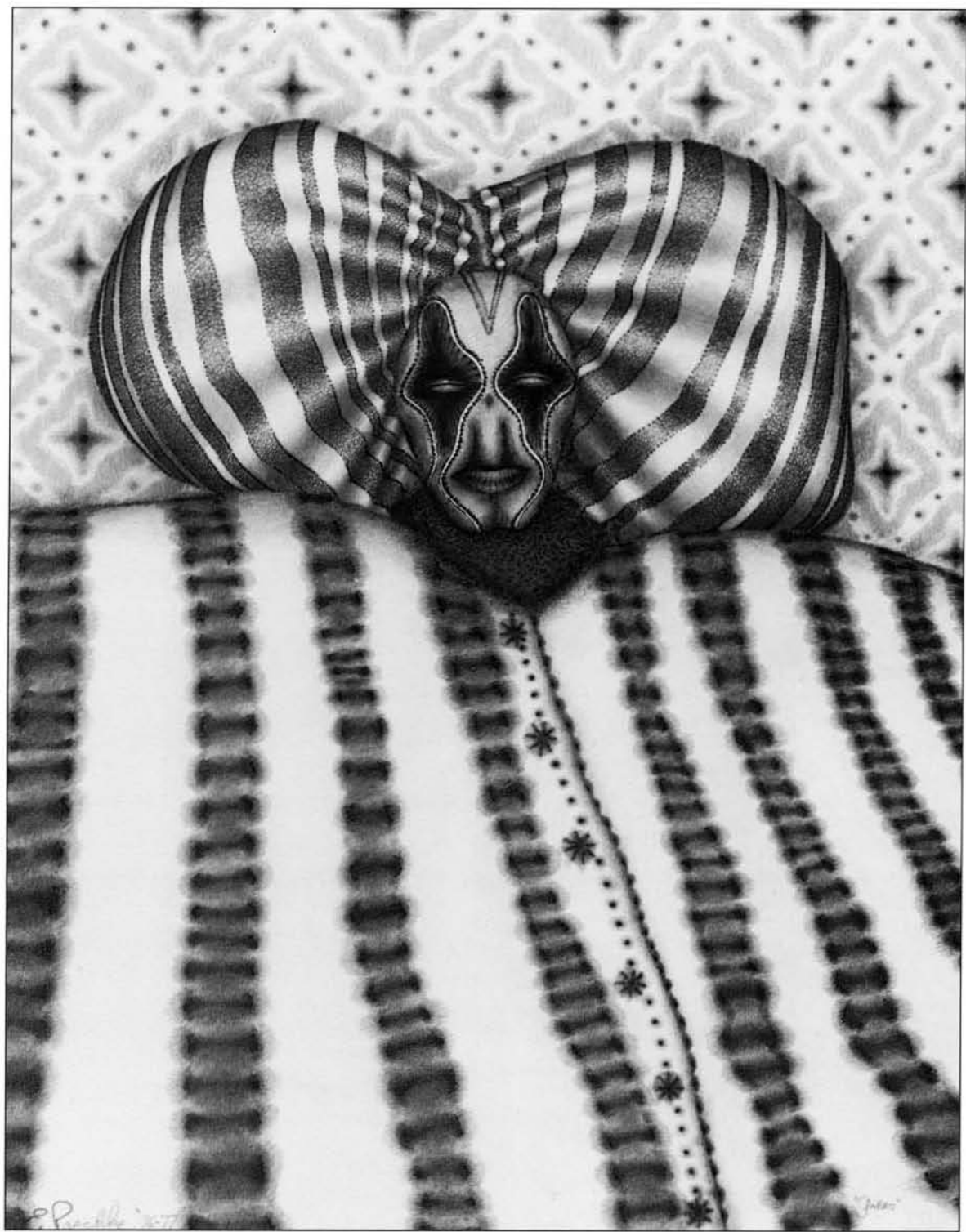
Critical to the realization of this exhibition are the talents of two longtime admirers of the art of Ed Paschke. The first, critic and art historian Dennis Adrian, has long been among the most eloquent supporters of Paschke's work, and has drawn from his years of experience in the art of the Chicago School to provide the catalogue essay. The second, Paschke collector Robert Bergman, has been instrumental in locating drawings in Chicago collections, gathering docu-

mentation, acting as a liaison between collectors and the Art Institute, and sharing his many insights into Paschke's work. In his organizational role, Mr. Bergman has been assisted by William H. Bengtson, David Russick, and Alexa Reimer at Phyllis Kind Gallery, as well as by Marianne Deson, Sonia Zaks, Karen Lennox, and Michele Vishny. To these people, and to the collectors who made Paschke drawings available for study and inclusion in the exhibition, we owe a debt of thanks. We are especially grateful to Ed Paschke for his generous assistance.

At the Art Institute, the following merit special acknowledgment in realizing both the exhibition and the catalogue. David Chandler, Conservator of Prints and Drawings, Harriet K. Stratis, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Paper Conservation, and Preparators Christine Conniff-O'Shea and Caesar Citraro in the Department of Prints and Drawings; Alan Newman, Julie Zeffel, and Christopher Gallagher in Imaging and Technical Services; Joseph Cochand in Graphic Services; Stephen Eskilson and Terry Ann R. Neff in Publications; and Emily Romero in Museum Registration, all assisted with either the exhibition or the catalogue. Kevin Sharp, Research Assistant in the Department of Prints and Drawings, has been involved in every aspect of the project. Finally, we would like to thank Neal Benezra, Curator of Twentieth-Century Painting and Sculpture, and organizer of the Ed Paschke paintings retrospective, for his support of this exhibition.

DOUGLAS W. DRUICK

Prince Trust Curator of Prints and Drawings



THE DRAWINGS OF ED PASCHKE

Dennis Adrian

The study and presentation of major works of draughtsmanship by Chicago's most important artists has been a somewhat neglected pursuit. Thus, the exhibition of Ed Paschke drawings that the Prints and Drawings Department of The Art Institute of Chicago has happily decided to mount in accompaniment to the retrospective exhibition of Paschke's paintings (also organized by the Art Institute) is a very welcome indication of serious attention to this field. Having followed closely for more than twenty years the work of Ed Paschke, I am delighted now to have the opportunity to try to characterize his accomplishments in the art of drawing.

Paschke's drawing practice is unusual in a number of ways. He does not make (or, at least, has not made for a very long time) drawings that are anticipations, preparatory or working drawings for paintings. Preliminary design and the development of his painting images take place on the canvases themselves. The black oil underdrawings in Paschke's paintings, in addition to performing these functions often carried out by other artists in separate drawings, are necessary and inseparable parts of the tonal structure and intensity, playing as well a critical role in the precise details of his color.

For works in other media, especially lithography, Paschke has made drawings that can be considered working drawings, in that

they are careful and detailed anticipations of the ultimate print. *Klaus* of 1976 (cat. no. 22) exemplifies this kind of drawing, which, however, is also intended to be, and is, a completely autonomous work of art.

Also, Paschke does not draw casually or notationally in order to set down images or ideas that catch his eye and might have some further



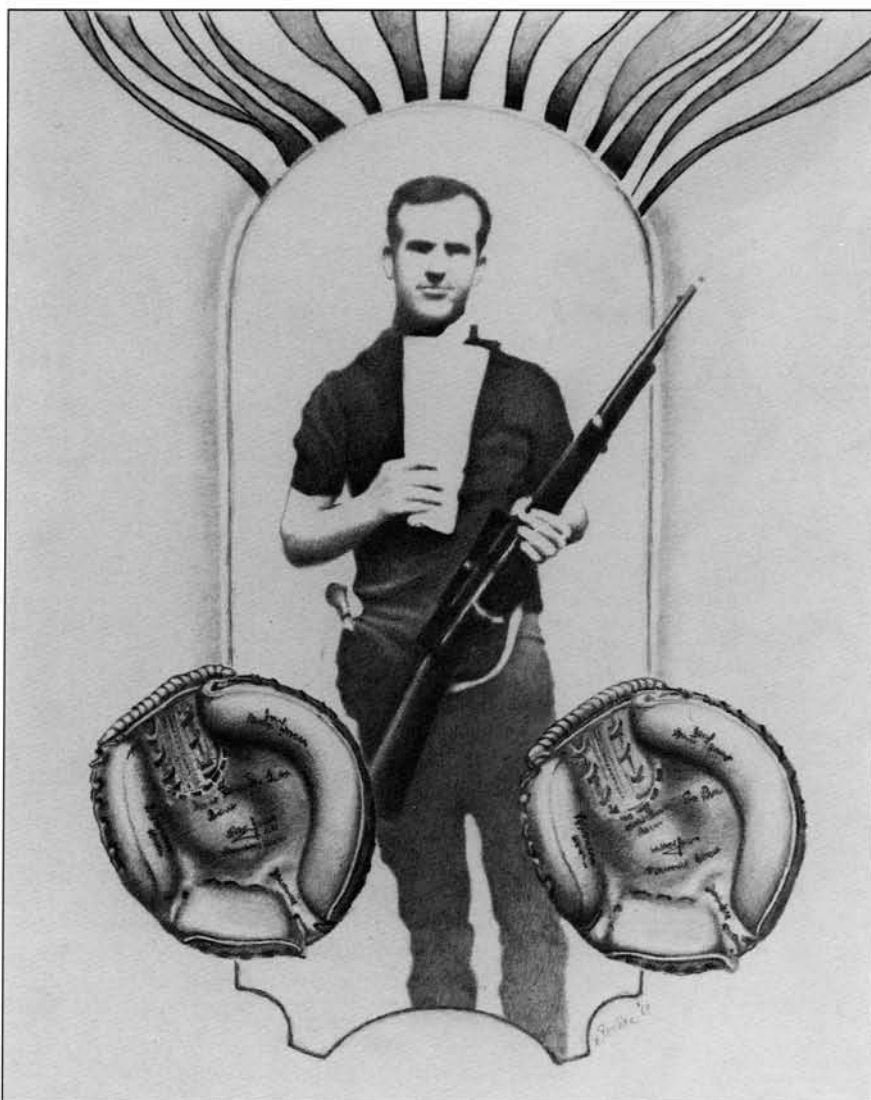
later use. For Paschke, the clippings, posters, and printed ephemera that he tacks up on his studio walls appear to fulfill the function of a sketch-book; this is entirely consistent with the role that such images and techniques of the commercial media play in all his work and especially in his paintings. An important aspect of this involvement is the kind of visual deconstruction of an image or medium that Paschke has mentioned in various contexts: taking apart, altering, or "undoing" an image seems for him to imply that the image in question must be completed or in some way rectified before the artist deals with it. This activity of critical emendation perhaps functions for Paschke as a substitute for more conventional drawing studies and may explain the virtual absence of sketches or preparatory drawings in his work.

Most of Paschke's drawings, therefore, are independent works, and meant to be so considered. They are usually highly finished, the forms carefully modeled with tonalities to create a distinct and convincing sense of volume. There are few purely linear elements. The images most frequently present the principal subject, most often a figure, centrally placed against a background that is usually the undifferentiated surface of the paper itself but that may bear a pattern or design of some sort. Occasionally, and sometimes for a special purpose, such as the designs Paschke employed for Charles Ludlam's absurdist play *Turds in Hell* (see below), the backgrounds contain secondary images that relate to the principal figures. His most recent drawings make greater use of these background possibilities than before.

Paschke prefers to draw with tonal and chromatic mediums such as graphite, colored pencils, and oil pastels. While very early works might have watercolor or touches of gouache, within the period of Paschke's mature styles, that is from 1968 to the present, he seems to have, until this year, avoided all liquid mediums such as

brush or pen and ink. His choice of more flexible mediums seems to be both because the tonal constructions he employs must be built up slowly with delicate veils of working over the forms and because the uncompromising linearity of pen and ink or the immediate finality of brush and ink are at present alien to his artistic concerns. Paschke's natural affinity for tonal and chromatic modeling is evident in his selection as images for his paintings of Diego Velázquez's infinitely subtle *Juan de Pareja* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), or Leonardo's ambiguously compelling *Mona Lisa* (Paris, Musée du Louvre). The Velázquez served as subject for a drawing as well, *Untitled (Pareja)* of 1990 (cat. no. 31). Furthermore, one of Paschke's prime referents, television, does not have linear elements in the usual sense, although its scanning pattern is horizontally linear.

The formats of Paschke's drawings vary from the modest size of about 12 x 10 inches up to 40 x 60 inches, these falling within range of the smaller paintings, though the latter are ordinarily much larger. Paschke has not so far had any reason to employ large scale in drawings, and conversely, very small Paschke paintings are rare. Therefore, while seldom offered in his paintings, Paschke's drawings and prints share an intimacy of viewing distance like that of the magazine or newspaper page, the television screen, or smaller posters or handbills. Possibly, some correlation exists between the physical dimensions of Paschke's graphic art and the materials with which it deals and which to some extent are its sources. It is interesting that in a group of drawings of very large format shown at Galerie Darthea Speyer in Paris in 1983, Paschke's artistic concerns seemed more closely related to his contemporaneous paintings than in any other previous instance. While these large works are not quite what one can easily call (except technically) paintings on paper, the dissolving light spots in them operate very much



4 **UNTITLED
(GUNMAN WITH MITTS).**
1969

like the dissolving blushes of pale hues in related paintings. *Dosse* of 1983 (cat. no. 28; not illustrated) reveals, in both its large dimensions and the particularities of its working, medium, and imagery, this unusually close connection between the two mediums.

Thematically, Paschke's drawings parallel and are continuations of the imagistic and contentual concerns of his contemporaneous paintings. Even when the correspondence of image between a given painting or print and a drawing is quite close, there are significant variations; the drawings are in no way "versions" or simple transpositions of an idea from one medium to another. Paschke's drawings have a luminescence, a sense of being irradiated with light, that is analogous to, but essentially different from, the treatment of light in his paintings. The

reflective radiance of the paper, whether toned or not, is something to which Paschke is highly sensitized. Hardly any of the drawn images completely covers the sheet. The white grounds of Paschke's canvases, by contrast, are never actually exposed although the veil of color may occasionally be thin and translucent. This subtle distinction marks an essential differentiation between Paschke's approaches to painting and to drawing.

Paschke's drawings to date can, to some extent, be organized into groups or series, though these divisions often differ in their artistic functions. Some of Paschke's early drawings, such as *Oz Park*, 1967 (cat. no. 2; not illustrated) and *Untitled (Gunman with Mitts)* of 1969 (cat. no. 4), deal with an image of John F. Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, derived

from a famous photograph, which the artist also used in one of his best-known paintings, *Purple Ritual* of 1967. It is clear that the central figure intrigued Paschke and that he considered a variety of imagistic contexts in which to set it. The two drawings are not studies for the painting, but rather independent explorations of a theme that fascinated the artist long before and after the concentratedly iconic painted version.

Throughout the early 1970s, Paschke produced groups of drawings that are united by similarities of subject, theme, and treatment, and that have a relationship to his contemporaneous or immediately subsequent paintings, such as the two Oswald drawings mentioned above. The drawings of baseball mitts, of shoes and feet, and of figure subjects such as *Untitled (Babs)* of 1972 (cat. no. 7; not illustrated), and a number of other drawings of female figures in showgirl attire from the same and the following two years fall into such a category.

A group of drawings that reflect, in a way, another overwhelming historical and media event are those dealing with the principal figures in Richard M. Nixon's cabinet and administration at the time of the Watergate disgrace. In these, such as *John N.* of 1975 (cat. no. 19; not illustrated), it is John N. Mitchell, the indicted United States Attorney General, who has been turned into a fantastic, monstrously theatrical personage. The idea behind this suite seems to have been that these political figures, through their constant news exposure in a bizarre moment of American political history, have become transmogrified into mythic beings whose attire is not easily distinguishable from their anatomy. Through their roles in a public drama, they have assumed the iconic stature we are most familiar with in the world of rock-music entertainment. Fantastically bedizened, they have been given the appearance that the artist felt corresponds to their out-of-scale natures and disquieting emotional constitutions.

This "political" series appears to have extended naturally from a group of graphite drawings of stars, many black, in the pop-music world. *Charlie, Claude, and Jimmie*, all of 1975 (cat. nos. 16-18), already display the intricate patternings of invented costumes and fabrics that are even more prominent in the slightly larger format "political" series.

A distinction between these two groups is paralleled in Paschke's painting practice. The political series consists of portraits, and thus the figures have bodies that, while exaggerated or distorted, can still be seen as within the realms of anatomical possibility. The music-world figure drawings contain likenesses in the facial features, but the bodies and/or extremities are pure fantasy. Paschke observes the same distinction in his paintings. With very few exceptions, works undertaken as portraits observe an anatomical credibility, whereas in others a recognizable likeness is set on a completely invented body.

In 1972, Paschke had an unusual and very productive opportunity: he produced the sets, costumes, props, and a poster for Charles Ludlam's *Turds in Hell*, a startling and hilarious theatrical undertaking by the Godzilla Rainbow Troupe at the Old Kingston Mines theater in Chicago. For this remarkable project, Paschke decided to provide sets in the form of graphite and oil-pastel drawings to be projected on the walls of the theater. The twenty-three drawings for *Turds in Hell* are meant to respond to and, to some extent, illustrate (or at least symbolize) the locales and content of the different scenes of the play (one was even under water). In this case, Paschke worked to accommodate a pre-existing program from another artistic, literary source. A comparison of the text and the drawings shows that Paschke very freely and intuitively responded with his own ideas about suitable visualizations rather than following closely any textual indications. Worked over the whole



sheets, these drawings resemble small paintings. Although the images are not closely related to Paschke's contemporaneous paintings, interestingly enough, some of them seem to anticipate imagistic elements that appear in paintings a decade later. For example, the partly dissolved and transparent head in the drawing *Desert Island I (Turds in Hell)* of 1972 (cat. no. 6) looks forward to similar effects and compositions in a variety of later paintings of heads, often those of black people.

Paschke's recent drawings reflect his customary attitude toward drawing, that is, they generally explore an artistic idea that has a parallel but different existence in contemporaneous paintings: *Le Gel (Frost)* of 1989 (cat. no. 29) and *T.V. Thinking* of 1990 (cat. no. 30; not illustrated) are such examples. The recent drawing *Untitled (Pareja)* (cat. no. 31), discussed above, is quite close to the related painting. In the drawing, the cropped face of Velázquez's *Juan de Pareja* extends to the limits of the field of the

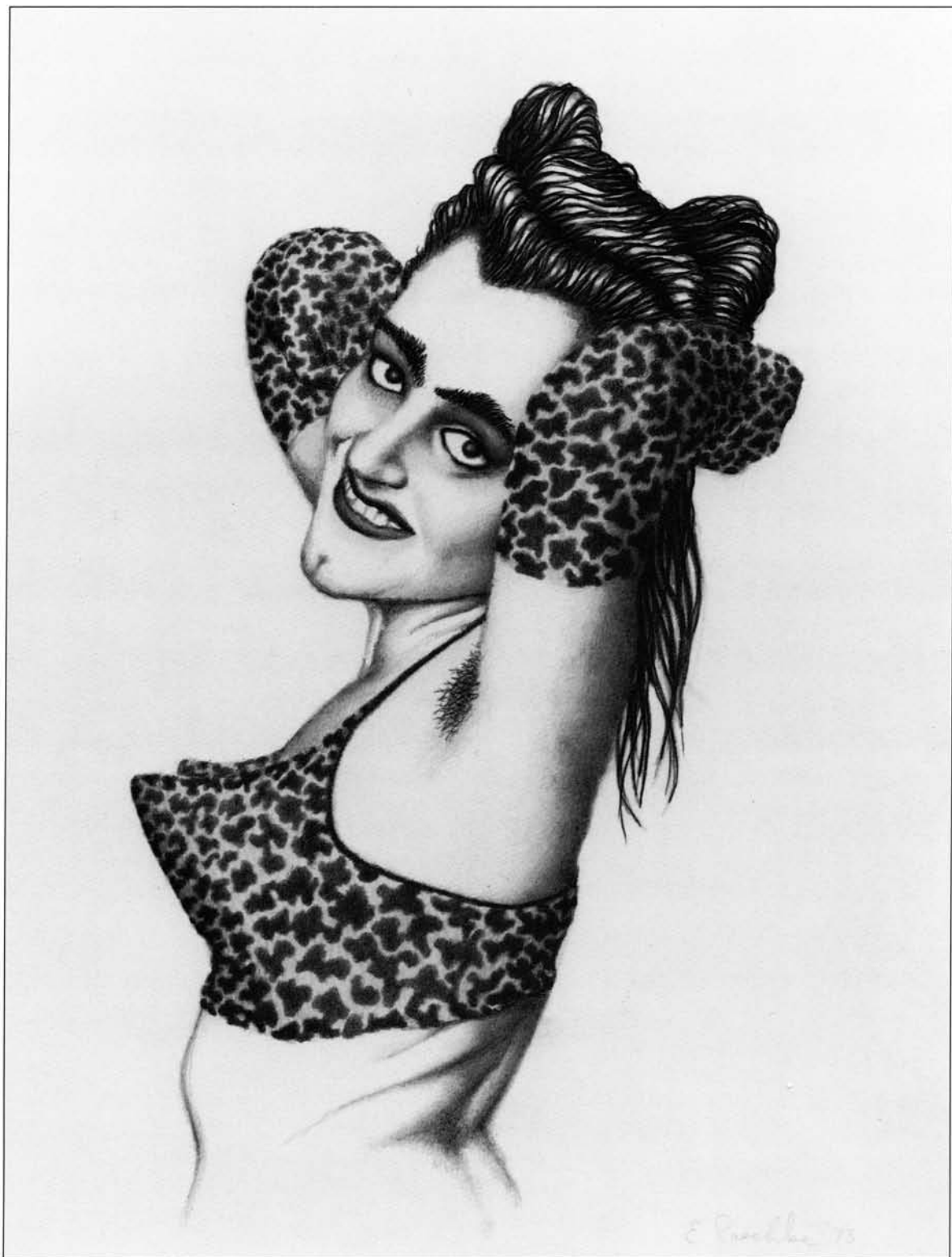
drawing and the paper is all but covered with fine touches of graphite, colored pencils, and, most unusually, ink. The richness and complexity of idea and technique here perhaps signal Paschke's interest in increasingly ambitious and demanding undertakings in his drawings.

The group of Paschke drawings in the present exhibition offers the viewer an opportunity to sample every major variety of the artist's undertakings in this field, from the early *Playboy* magazine illustration of 1962, *Untitled (Queen Dido)* (cat. no. 1; not illustrated), to *Lucky Cop* of 1990 (cat. no. 34; not illustrated), the drawing of a head of a policeman set against a field of radiating bands of color. The works reveal the different kinds of functions drawing can have for the artist, and the very high standard of artistic accomplishment which is an impressive aspect of Paschke's production in all media offers the serious *amateur* of fine twentieth-century draughtsmanship an important, instructive, and satisfying experience.



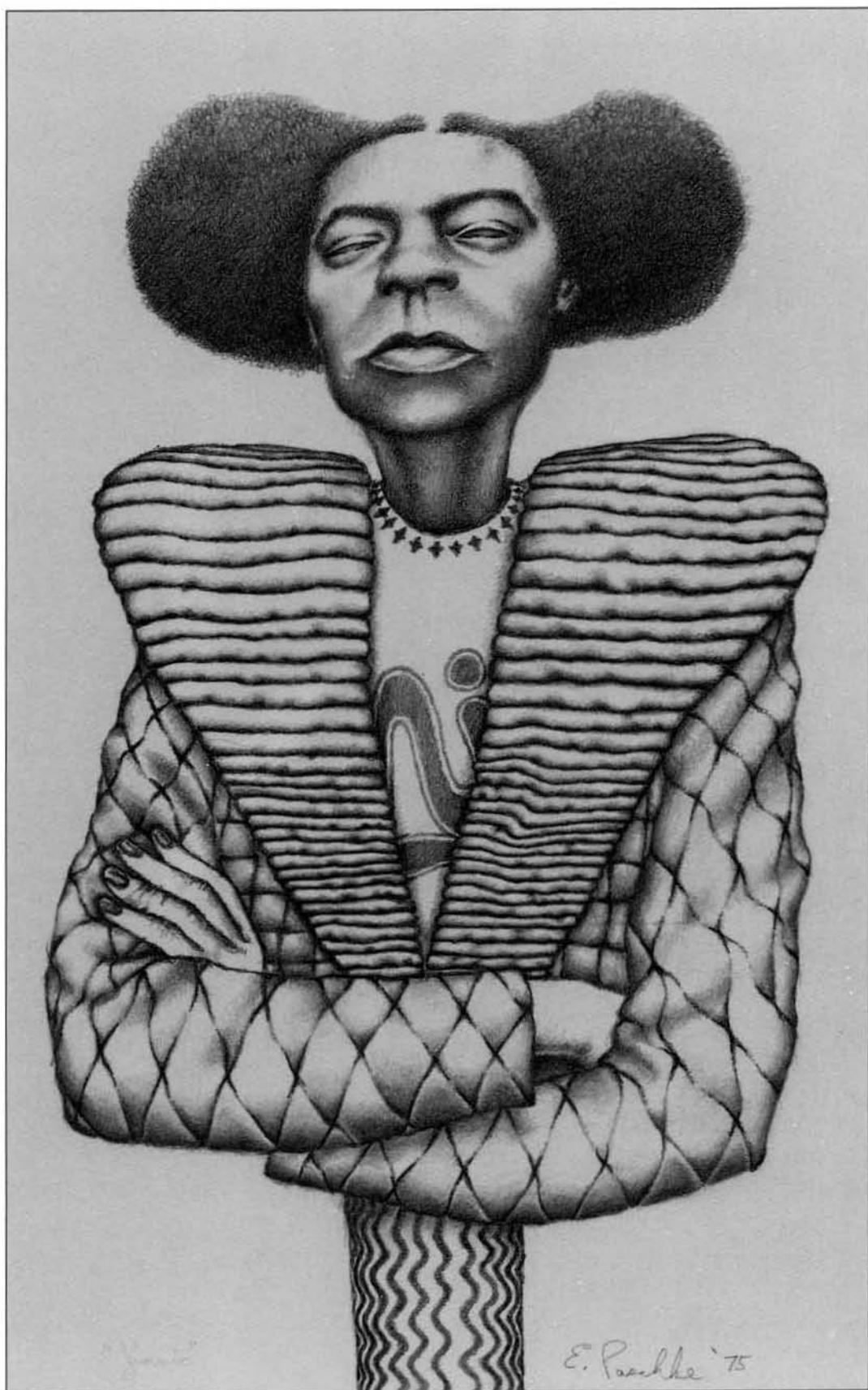






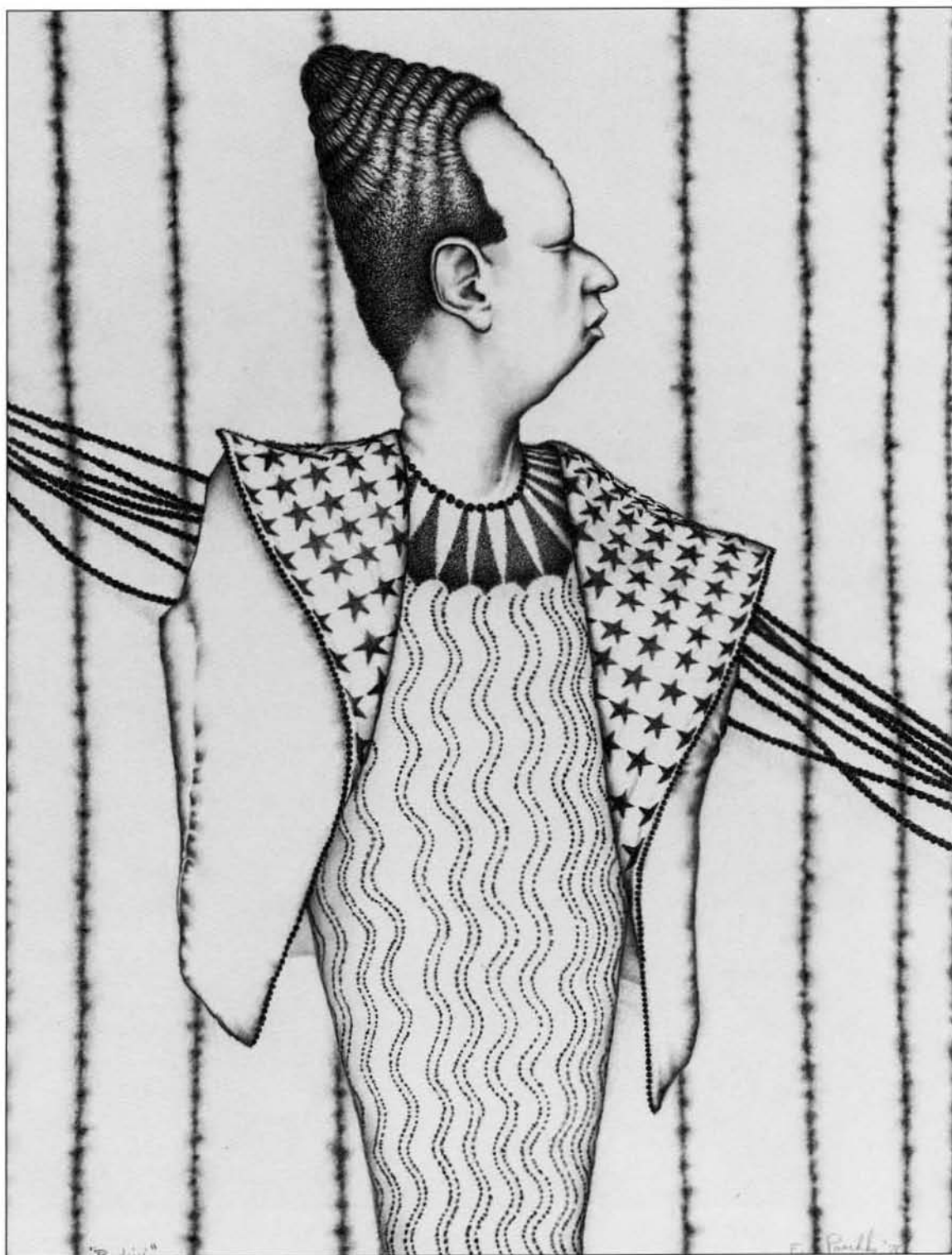


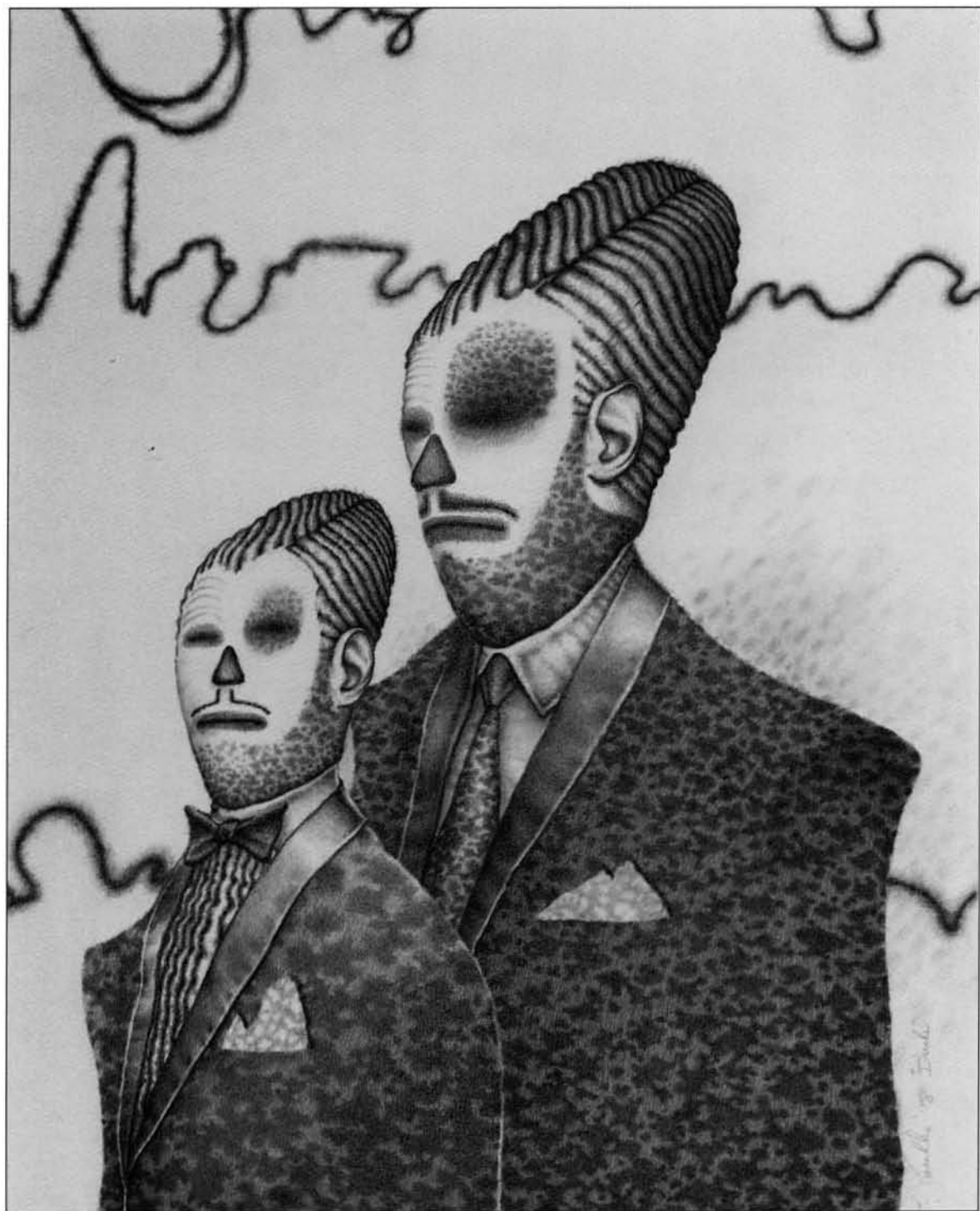




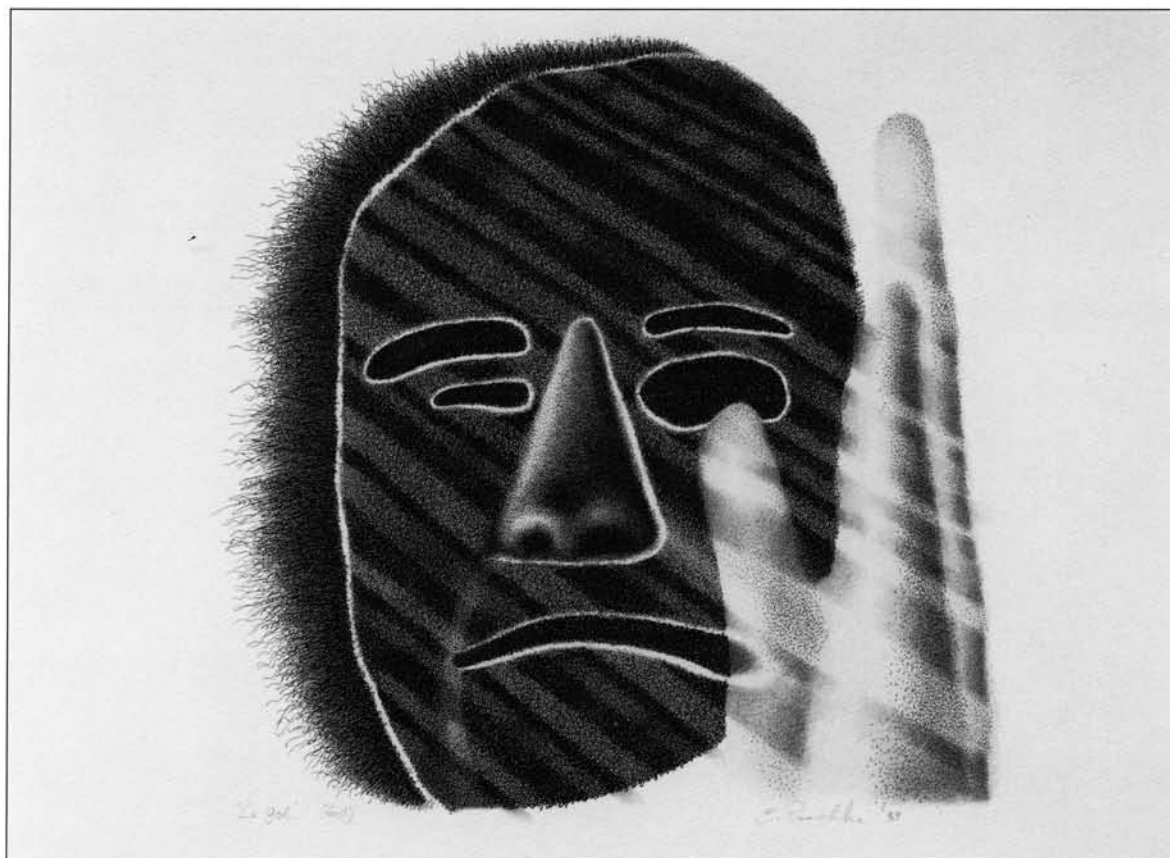












PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM H. BENGTSON, COURTESY OF PHYLLIS KIND GALLERY, INC.

- 1 **UNTITLED (QUEEN DIDO)**, 1962
Black chalk on paper
565 x 193 mm
Playboy Enterprises, Inc.,
Chicago
- 2 **OZ PARK**, 1967
Graphite, colored
pencils, and felt-tipped
pen on paper
570 x 482 mm
Collection of the artist
- 3 **UNTITLED**, 1968
Graphite, red colored
pencil, and watercolor
on paper
330 x 273 mm
Collection of the artist
- 4 **UNTITLED (GUNMAN
WITH MITTS)**, 1969
Graphite on paper
584 x 457 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 5 **BLACK MASS II
(TURDS IN HELL)**, 1972
Graphite, felt-tipped pen,
watercolor, and gouache
on paper
483 x 635 mm
Mrs. Ruth Horwich, Chicago
- 6 **DESERT ISLAND I
(TURDS IN HELL)**, 1972
Graphite, watercolor, and
oil pastel on paper
470 x 622 mm
Dr. and Mrs. Peter Broido,
West Chicago
- 7 **UNTITLED (BABS)**, 1972
Graphite and colored
pencils on paper
560 x 432 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 8 **UNTITLED
(GREEN BUCKLE)**, 1972
Graphite, ink, and colored
pencils on paper
763 x 610 mm
Jones Faulkner Collection,
Chicago
- 9 **UNTITLED (SKINNY
BOOTS)**, 1972
Graphite and colored
pencils on paper
432 x 584 mm
H. M. Buchbinder Family
Collection, Chicago
- 10 **UNTITLED (EDITH)**, 1973
Graphite and colored
pencils on paper
558 x 432 mm
Mrs. Ruth Horwich, Chicago
- 11 **UNTITLED (LADY I)**,
1973
Graphite on paper
432 x 280 mm
H. M. Buchbinder Family
Collection, Chicago
- 12 **CHARLENE**, 1974
Graphite, ink, and colored
pencils on paper
568 x 445 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Robert A. Lewis
Fund, 1982.122
- 13 **ORLANDO**, 1974
Graphite on paper
610 x 458 mm
Leon and Rosalie Kirschner,
Skokie, Illinois
- 14 **UNTITLED
(BLACK MAN)**, 1974
Graphite on paper
572 x 442 mm
Robert Lustutter, Chicago
- 15 **VERMILLIA**, 1974
Graphite and colored
pencils on paper
558 x 432 mm
Don Baum, Chicago
- 16 **CHARLIE**, 1975
Graphite on paper
549 x 350 mm
Michael Stavy, Chicago
- 17 **CLAUDE**, 1975
Graphite on paper
558 x 355 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 18 **JIMMIE**, 1975
Graphite on paper
553 x 344 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 19 **JOHN N.**, 1975
Graphite on paper
736 x 584 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 20 **VICTOR**, 1975
Graphite on paper
548 x 340 mm
Sonia Zaks, Chicago
- 21 **BUDINI**, 1976
Graphite on paper
724 x 575 mm
Ronald Krueck, Chicago
- 22 **KLAUS**, 1976
Graphite on paper
724 x 572 mm
Sonia Zaks, Chicago
- 23 **TROPICALE**, 1976
Graphite on paper
738 x 588 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Phil
Short, 1977.54
- 24 **ENZIO**, 1976/77
Graphite and colored
pencils on paper
736 x 584 mm
Ann and Walter Nathan,
Chicago
- 25 **GABRO**, 1976/77
Graphite, colored
pencils, and felt-tipped
pen on paper
736 x 584 mm
Alan and Sherry Koppel,
Chicago
- 26 **DUELE**, 1978
Graphite on paper
736 x 587 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 27 **COMMERCIALE II**, 1981
Graphite, colored
pencils, and felt-tipped
pen on paper
355 x 552 mm
Mrs. Ruth Horwich, Chicago
- 28 **DOSSE**, 1983
Oil pastel, charcoal, and
black chalk on paper
1022 x 1520 mm
Nancy E. Paschke,
Chicago
- 29 **LE GEL (FROST)**, 1989
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
565 x 762 mm
Mr. and Mrs. James P.
Young, Chicago
- 30 **T.V. THINKING**, 1990
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
571 x 768 mm
Private collection, Chicago
- 31 **UNTITLED
(PAREJA)**, 1990
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
232 x 298 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Restricted gift of Carol and
Douglas Cohen, RX 18511
- 32 **B.T. YELLOW**, 1990
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
298 x 232 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Restricted gift of Carol and
Douglas Cohen, RX 18511
- 33 **B.T. GREEN**, 1990
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
298 x 232 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Restricted gift of Carol and
Douglas Cohen, RX 18511
- 34 **LUCKY COP**, 1990
Graphite, ink, and
colored pencils on paper
298 x 232 mm
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Restricted gift of Carol and
Douglas Cohen, RX 18512

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