

TOM WESSELMANN

Drawn in Steel: Metal Editions

16 January - 8 March 2025

38 avenue Matignon

75008 Paris



Monica Asleep on Blanket, 1985/2004

Alkyd oil on cut-out steel, edition of 25, 16.5 × 30.5 cm

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In an echo to “Pop Forever, Tom Wesselmann &...”, the remarkable retrospective of the artist’s work now on view at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris until 24 February 2025, Galerie Lelong & Co. is delighted to be presenting a group of Tom Wesselmann’s “steel drawings” for the first time. While collage and assemblage play a large part in the artist’s work, drawing had always been a fundamental aspect of his practice, as it was for his contemporary Roy Lichtenstein. What sets Wesselmann apart is his search for a drawing in which the line, whether in black or in colour, is free from the paper and slightly detached from the wall on which it rests. From the mid-1980s onwards, the artist began his *Steel Drawings*, which would later lead to the *Metal Editions* that are the subject of this exhibition.

In a text from September 2003, he expressed himself very simply and clearly on this work:

“The biggest departure in my work was in laser-cut steel. The original premise was to make drawings in steel as though they magically had just been drawn in steel. All of the act of drawing was still present: the spontaneity, the false line etc. At that time, sophisticated

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Philippe Fouchard-Filippi

Tel: +33 1 53 28 87 53 / +33 6 60 21 11 94 / phff@fouchardfilippi.com

www.fouchardfilippi.com

presse@galerie-lelong.com



@galerielelongparis



@galerielelongparis

computer laser technology was not yet available but slowly came along to assist my intentions. The steel line drawings looked like they were drawn on the wall and I was intrigued that you could pick up a drawing by the lines and hold it.”¹

Tom Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati in February 1931 and died in New York in December 2004. After studying at the Cooper Union in New York, he soon joined the informal group dubbed *Pop Art* by the critics. His works are part of the collections of many museums around the world, including the MoMa and the Whitney Museum (New York), the Smithsonian Museum (Washington D.C.), the Museum Ludwig (Cologne) or the Nationalgalerie (Berlin). While he was recognized later in France than his companions Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns, several major retrospectives have been dedicated to him in French institutions: at the Fondation Cartier in Paris in 1994, at the Musée Matisse in Nice in 2023, and currently at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris.

Exhibition organised in collaboration with The Estate of Tom Wesselmann and Cristea Roberts Gallery.

¹ *Tom Wesselmann Draws*, 2009, Haunch of Venison, New York. Published to coincide with an exhibition organised by his wife Claire.

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