

## Press Release

### Channa Horwitz: 'Rules of the Game'

15 March – 4 May 2019

27 Bell Street, London

Opening: 14 March, 6 – 8pm

*"I play with logical structure as one plays a game. The rules are determined beforehand and then the drawing is allowed to emerge as it is governed by those rules."* Channa Horwitz

Channa Horwitz's second exhibition with Lisson Gallery, entitled 'Rules of the Game', highlights the LA-based artist's fascination with capturing space, movement and time through structure, line and pattern – an investigation she pursued resolutely from the 1960s until her death in 2013. Featuring a selection of drawings in ink, casein and coloured pencil alongside book works, studies and a number of ambitious, rarely seen multipart works on paper, the exhibition highlights Horwitz's rigorous conceptual structures and self-determined rules. The show is the first in London since her critically acclaimed survey at Raven Row in 2016 and coincides with a major solo exhibition at MUSAC in León, Spain, which runs until 26 May.

Horwitz was an artist who worked largely outside of the art world canon, despite her lasting friendship with Sol LeWitt and her studies at CalArts in the early 1970s alongside peers Allan Kaprow and John Baldessari. She chose to pursue her own, distinct language through logical systems and contended that the fewer choices she allowed herself, the more she could discover. Early on in her practice, she reduced all of her choices for subject to the circle and the square, and her choices of colour to black and white. From here she created a multitude of complex and intricate drawings, paintings, moving sculptures and performances, but all within the rules she had established for herself. This reduction allowed her to achieve creative freedom; using these artistic rules as the creative conduit for the expansion of her ideas.

The exhibition will present a survey of Horwitz's oeuvre, showcasing a selection of works that sat at the core of her practice. A classic piece from Horwitz's *Sonakinatography* series (based on the Greek words for sound, motion, notation), developed in the 1960s, will be on display alongside works from her later bodies of work such as *Levels*, *Slices*, *Variation and Inversion on a Rhythm*, *Flowings* and *Canons*. On the surface, these series appear mathematical and computer-generated – disciplines objective by nature – yet all of the artist's algorithms were entirely self-established and self-generated, resolutely hand-made and non-technological. Rather than mystifying her methodology, Horwitz carefully documented the rules which governed each work, often including these as a small cipher visible within the drawing. She also wrote extensively about her systems and how they each progressed from one another and the exhibition will include a book work and excerpts from her writings which have not been seen in the UK before.

On view will be *Sonakinatography, Composition 5, 1973*, which she later called *And Then There Were None*. This was part of her *Sonakinatography Expanded* series which explored movement across a horizontal plane. "I started to play with black squares on graph paper, moving all of the squares in units rather than as individuals... playing graphically with motion in time." Horwitz took this investigation beyond the page, animating the work via a limited edition flip book and film projection, both of which are on display here.

For Horwitz's next series, *Four Levels*, she explored a more dimensional progression of units, expanding her black squares over several levels and morphing her forms from squares into cubes before contracting in reverse, as determined by her self-generated system of rules. These works progressed in dimension, constructing and deconstructing through four levels which were sometimes as wide as the one presented here which is almost 5 metres. Fascinated with the concept that "with miniaturization comes complexity" the artist reduced these wide *Four Levels* works to their essence and came up with subsequent bodies of work presented here including *To the Top*.

As Horwitz's ideas developed so too did the scope and scale of her explorations. In her series *Slices* she began dissecting her forms horizontally and vertically to break down their structural composition, comparing her investigations to the slicing of a loaf of bread. She sliced from side to middle, top to bottom, and front to back, coming up with visually diverse works that were based on the same linear logic. From here, she expanded her compositions into large, multipart pieces called *Variation and Inversion on a Rhythm*, two of which are presented for the first time in the UK. There is an evident sense of logic and play visible within these works in which the evolution of her forms can be traced along the horizontal, vertical and diagonal axes. Horwitz found that "if chance plays out long enough, it will become structure", signifying that behind the appearance of chance or chaos is a hidden order.

The final section of the exhibition focuses on Horwitz's *Canon* works, in which she intensified the layering and multiplication of her algorithms to create dense matrixes over 12 levels. These works, executed in both black ink and coloured casein represent the culmination of her explorations into rhythm and pattern, and showcase her exquisite draughtsmanship.

Alongside Channa Horwitz's exhibition, Lisson Gallery will present *A Chamber for Horwitz; Sonakinatography Transcriptions in Surround Sound* (2015) by Haroon Mirza. By translating one of Horwitz's *Sonakinatography* compositions into an audio-visual environment, Mirza created an immersive multi-sensory installation as an homage to the artist.

### **About Channa Horwitz**

Born in Los Angeles, where she lived and worked for her entire life, Channa Horwitz (1932–2013) studied graphic design in the early 1950s at Art Center College of Design and Fine Art at Cal State Northridge in the early 1960s. In 1972 she received a BFA from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. There she studied with more well-known peers John Baldessari and Allan Kaprow, participating in some of Kaprow's notorious 'Happenings' and creating her own. Now regarded as an important proponent of Conceptual Art and West Coast Minimalism alongside Mary Corse, John McCracken and others, Horwitz only received art world endorsement much later in life, when she was included in the Whitney Biennial (2014) and the Venice Biennale (2013) in the year of her death, aged 80.

Horwitz's work is currently the subject of a solo exhibition, 'El Factor Ocho (Factor of Eight)', at MUSAC (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León), Spain, until 26 May 2019. Prior to this, Horwitz's work was the subject of solo exhibitions including: 'Progressions and Rhythms of Eight', Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (2018); Raven Row, London, UK (2016); Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary art, Berlin, Germany (2015) and Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Potsdam, Germany (2009) among others. Her work has been included in major group exhibitions such as 'Thinking Machines: Art and Design in the Computer Age, 1959-1989' at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA (2018), as well as others staged at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2016); Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil (2015); Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland (2015); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, USA (2015); 2014 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2014); the 55th Venice Biennale, Italy (2013); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany (2013); Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2012) and Kunsthau Dresden, Germany (2012) among others. Her work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, USA; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA, among others. Horwitz received an Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978, and was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship Grant in 2013.

### **About Lisson Gallery**

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 61 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie, to the public for the first time. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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