

THE ART STUDENTS LEAGUE PRESENTS
DRAWINGS: VACLAV VYTLACIL
JULY 15 – AUGUST 18, 2021

Never-before-seen drawings discovered at the Sparkill estate of Vaclav Vytlačil, the legendary League Instructor and Alum, whose influence helped shape the course of American art for decades



Vaclav Vytlačil and students at The Art Students League, 1977

(New York, NY): The Art Students League of New York is pleased to present *Drawings: Vaclav Vytlačil*, celebrating the work of Vavlav Vytlačil (1892–1984) on view July 15–August 18, 2021. The exhibition features over 80 never-before-seen drawings by the legendary League Instructor and alumnus, whose influence helped shape the course of American art for decades. The exhibition includes works spanning over five decades and provides insight into Vytlačil’s obsessive drawing practice, tracing his evolution from early figurative works and landscapes to abstraction. Drawn from the League’s permanent collection, the exhibition marks the first time the works have been displayed publicly.

Vytlačil studied at The Art Students League from 1913 to 1916. After spending several years in Europe where he was greatly influenced by Cubism, he returned to The League in 1935, where he was one of its most influential instructors over the course of the next 41 years. In 1936, he took part in the founding of the American Abstract Artists group, and his career writ large has had a profound influence on modern American art. His students at the League included Louise Bourgeois, Robert Rauschenberg, Mavis Pusey, James Rosenquist, Tony Smith, Joseph Stapleton, and Cy Twombly, as well as later League Instructors Knox Martin and Frank O’Cain. In addition to The League, Vytlačil taught at Columbia University, The Art Institute of Chicago, and Boston College, and was lecturer in Berkeley, CA.

In 1995, eleven years after his death, Vytlačil's former home in Sparkill and his art works were donated to the The Art Students League. Most of the works discovered were landscape drawings produced during the late 50's and early 60's, or colorful abstract works produced around 1970. These drawings give an insight into Vytlačil's almost obsessive drawing practice and show how the early figurative works and landscapes slowly evolved into abstraction, a transformation which is closely linked with the popularization of abstraction in American art in general during the mid-to-late 20th Century. Vytlačil's works can be found in renowned institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.



Vaclav Vytlačil, Untitled, ca 1960, mixed media on paper



Vaclav Vytlačil, Untitled, ca 1970, mixed media on paper

Public Program

Monday July 26, 5 pm EST

Frank O'Cain on The Drawings and Teachings of Vaclav Vytlačil

League instructor Frank O'Cain will speak to a live audience about his experience and lessons learned while studying with Vaclav Vytlačil at the League in the 1970s. The talk will be held in the Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, 2nd Floor of The Art Students League where the exhibition is on view. Space is limited. Registration is required and is open to the public [here](#)

About The Art Students League of New York:

The League was founded in 1875 by students breaking away from the National Academy of Design. That independent spirit remains at The League today, where students pursue their work unconstrained by dogma, politics or burdensome tuition. We educate students in the language and process of making art in an environment where anyone who wishes to pursue arts education can realize his or her full potential. The League fulfills this mission by offering affordable, high-quality education and instruction in painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and assemblage. Artists who have studied at the League include Georgia O'Keeffe, Norman Rockwell, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, James Rosenquist and Ai-Weiwei, among others. theartstudentsleague.org

@asl NYC #asl NYC #vaclavvytlacil



215 West 57TH Street New York, NY 10019
[212.247.4510](tel:212.247.4510) | theartstudentsleague.org

The Art Students League of New York

Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, 2nd Floor
215 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

The Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery is open 11:00am through 6:00pm Monday through Friday.

The Art Students League Public Programs are supported by NYC Cultural Affairs.



Media Contacts: Third Eye

Tyler Mahowald, 212.355.9009 x 311
tyler@hellothirdeye.com

Annabel Toole, 212.355.9009 x 314
annabel@hellothirdeye.com