

# Eran Shakine

## Sunny Side Up



JOSEF ALBERS HAVING A SUNNY  
SIDE UP.

Hirmer

Nuit Banai Ed.

Eran Shakine Sunny Side Up

Edition J.B. Tesch

Hirmer

KILL ALL THE GRAFFITI ARTISTS



**Eran Shakine**

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Edited by  
**Nuit Banai**

Edition Jürgen B. Tesch

**Hirmer**

Munich London Chicago

*to Maya*

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## Minor Moments

### *Eran Shakine's Archive of Unofficial Histories*

Since 2005, Eran Shakine has been constructing a personal archive of unofficial histories. Armed with an oil stick, a vivid imagination, and a mordant sense of humor, Shakine's drawings weave their way through the annals of modernism and the heartbeat of contemporary culture in search of 'minor moments.' His idiosyncratic repository of famous and infamous cultural figures—artists, architects, fashion designers, musicians, and art-world glitterati—are rendered with an intimacy and irreverence that is habitually overshadowed by more heroic public narratives. Instead of accepting the scripted version of events, produced by well-orchestrated publicity photographs and legendary oral accounts, Shakine is interested in the lesser-known dimensions of his subjects. Though it may not be immediately apparent, this intimate gaze operates in two directions: It not only recasts the idealized icon as an individual with eccentricities and imperfections, but also asks the viewer to consider the extent to which Shakine is reflecting upon his own artistic practice and persona.

The series devoted to artists is perhaps the most transparent meditation on this theme. Much like a family gathering, there is a sense that Shakine is delving into a shared gene pool and exploring the affinities and *contretemps* that pervade familiar relations. A witty rejoinder to popular clichés about the majesty of the artistic process, these images expose the rarely seen fragility, isolation, and unceremonious conservation that goes hand in hand with aesthetic production. For instance, the existential bravado of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, largely formed by Hans Namuth's portraits from 1951, is summarily dispelled. In place of an inexhaustible choreography, we witness Pollock stretching his tired, aching back. Likewise, the aura of conceptual genius with which Marcel Duchamp has been anointed is transformed into sheer happenstance as he 'discovers' the readymade during a visit to the men's bathroom; Josef Alber's *Homage to the Square* materializes not so much from Bauhaus techniques, principles, and aspirations, but more prosaically in the semblance of a bright, yolky egg cooked sunny side up; and Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* would not have become an anti-Fascist *cri de coeur* without the artist having clean brushes at hand. The deliberations continue: What are the chances that Andy Warhol would have become

a poster boy for Pop Art had he been born in the Middle East? Do we have faith in Joseph Beuys' claims for mystical communion with a dead hare or, for that matter, with his public? And how would post-war art in Britain have turned out if Gilbert Proesch and George Passmore had not met at the Saint Martin's School of Art in 1967? In these comical speculations, Shakine earnestly ponders whether art is an outcome of 'genius,' as some myths would have us believe, or whether it emerges from fortuitous events, uncertain situations, and an incredible amount of strenuous labor that only becomes minted as 'virtuosic' in retrospect.

In the series devoted to architects and fashion designers, Shakine suggests that the mystique of genius can only be sustained if we believe that a work of art leads an autonomous existence independently of its maker. To disembodify the most eminent buildings and renowned couture of the twentieth century is to miss out on the more compelling and often zany aspects of creativity. Literally turning this lost opportunity on its head, Shakine coifs alpha-architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, Norman Foster, and Zaha Hadid with headpieces that resemble their own structural achievements. Similarly, he outfits fashion designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, Tom Ford, and John Galliano in their signature pieces. Shakine's reattachment of modernist and contemporary masterworks to their inventor's body, whether as millinery appendages or sartorial statements, prompts us to wonder whether academic histories can fully account for the tactile, sensual, desiring flows and fantasies from which cultural enterprises arise. Yet it would be going too far to suggest that Shakine links the meaning of aesthetic objects to the explicit intentionality of their authors or to the complicit intervention of the body. The quirky, compromising positions of his figures are probably not ones they would devise for themselves. But what if we caught them unaware? Indeed, the spectator is invited to join Shakine as an artful partner in crime and inquisitive voyeur; one fascinated by the libidinal undercurrents coursing undetected and unpatrolled through the channels of artistic expression.

Though he may be piqued by the romance of aesthetic production, Shakine is equally attentive to the social codes of consumption. What is it that propels the public's insatiable hunger for visual and cultural stimulation? How do museums, galleries, and mega art exhibitions frame the viewing experience? And how does the public distinguish itself from other players in the game—museum directors, collectors, and artists? By treating the characters and conventions within the art world as a sequence of interconnected vignettes, Shakine probes the well-oiled system that prepares the public for the short-lived moment—approximately ten seconds—they eventually spend with an artwork. One of the most decisive aspects is the infrastructure of the space, whether it is the pristine architecture of the white cube, the information provided by the pithy wall labels, or the precise placement of benches in front of specific works. Perhaps less

perceptible, there is a marketing machine that generates excitement for art consumption by boosting its symbolic value. Both newness and rarity are prime commodities with the gallery owner touting his or her latest addition to the stable and a museum displaying Vincent Van Gogh's painting with respectful solemnity. An additional layer of rarified exclusivity is generated by the 'buzz' at the auctions and the branding of the must-see event of the year. You can almost hear the art jet set intoning, "Will I see you at Venice? Basel? Miami?" Operating together, these elements weave a subtle web of expectations around an art object, making it virtually impossible ever to have an unmediated, virgin encounter.

Shakine's drawings are so poignant because they contain a dose of moxie but are completely free of cynicism. This is especially true in the 'John and Yoko' series, a tender tribute to rock'n' roll's royal couple that depicts the paramours as just two regular kids in love. Other than the silhouette of John's guitar, there are no overt clues to their star status. In bed, on a walk, at a picnic, or in the bathtub, what strikes us most is the sweetness and simplicity of their companionship. The artist imagines what it would have been like for John and Yoko to have lived and loved apart from the hyper-exposure in the press that invaded their intimate life. In a protective gesture, Shakine uses his art to keep the menacing world at bay and turns "The Ballad of John and Yoko" into a private tune. Interestingly, as the titles make clear, all the drawings in the series pre-date the couple's wedding in March 1969—a distinct turning point in their own antics and tactics of self-representation. What followed, in bed-ins and demonstrations of 'bagism,' was an attempt to use their power as public figures to promote their campaign for peace. In this choice of dates, Shakine accentuates John and Yoko's affinity in the year before their decision to court the camera's glare and suggests, once again, that the public dimensions of an artist's life are intimately connected to the private sphere. Could anthems like "Give Peace a Chance" and "Imagine" have been written if John had never met Yoko?

Shakine's drawing technique plays a vital part in raising all these questions. With great fluidity and a quickness of execution, his images seem to emerge instantly, in the here and now, without any forethought or critical distance. Yet, as he describes it, the drawings appear at the spur of the moment because of a sustained conceptual process. A wide spectrum of artist books, photographic documentation, and catalogues become arbitrary data bases for unstructured 'research.' Not every figure is a contender for immortalization; Shakine needs to identify with him or her before they become part of his lexicon. As each series gestates, specific episodes become tangible in his mind, and only then does he commit them impulsively to paper or canvas. It is not surprising, of course, that a meditation on artistic practice and its myriad myths should occupy an artist. It is also not unexpected that he should delve into that uncharted, fertile zone

between conceptualization and realization, or in Lou Reed's famous lyrics, the lifetime that lies "between thought and expression." In that sense, the motley crew of characters that populate Shakine's highly personal archive represent various aspects of his own artistic persona in its complex intertwinement with his daily life at home and in the studio.

Working in Tel Aviv, a modernist city in the heart of the Middle East, might at times seem like a peripheral or solitary endeavor profoundly disconnected from the drumbeat of New York City, London, or Paris. Yet Shakine's reshuffling of all narratives, including the one that dictates the relationship between 'center' and 'periphery,' reminds us that Tel Aviv is not at all a marginal location but is the *ne plus ultra* of modernist cities. It is here that he spends as much time raising a close-knit family as being in the studio—a choice that may appear outside the norms of a milieu that reveres myths of creativity allied with mercurial intensity and narcissistic self-absorption at the expense of a deeply rooted family life. Yet these are only a few of the contradictions that have nurtured Shakine's thirty-year career, one that encompasses a rich output of painting, sculpture, and installation, and embraces figuration and abstraction in equal measure.

If these multiple contexts help us shed light on Shakine's drawings, there is something about their 'attitude' that also needs clarification. Though his droll transgressions bring the improbable to the fore, it would be wrong to characterize his works as either caricatures or cartoons. Instead, they resonate more closely with a graffiti artist's covert operations, which test the line of cultural consensus that distinguishes between official cultures and subcultures. Nimble with his oil stick, he proceeds in the manner of a graffiti artist who, under the cover of night, 'bombs' sanctioned public spaces to voice marginal or alternative points of view lying dormant in their midst. Living in an uneasy co-habitation and vying for representation, dominant and minor narratives appear as two sides of the same coin. It takes an artist like Eran Shakine, with a palpable passion for modernist and contemporary art, to cross these tenuous frontiers and tip the balance of power momentarily towards the minor.

# I ARTISTS

*Lucio Fontana's famous accident*

2009, Oil paintstick on canvas, 170 × 130 cm



LUCIO FONTANA FAMOUS ACCIDENT MILANO 1950



*Marcel Duchamp 1917*

2009, Oil paintstick on canvas, 120 × 150 cm

*Duchamp thinking what to do next*

2009, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 170 × 100 cm



DUCHAMP THINKING  
WHAT TO DO NEXT.



*Giacometti wondering the streets of Paris*

2009, Oil paintstick on canvas, 170 × 130 cm



GIACOMETTI ~~ALL~~ WONDERING THE STREETS OF  
PARIS WITH HIS SCULPTURES IN HIS  
COAT POCKETS



*Joseph Beuys special: fat & felt*

2010, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 180 × 170 cm

*How to explain a dead picture to Joseph Beuys*

2010, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 200 × 180 cm



HOW TO EXPLAIN A DEAD PICTURE TO  
JOSEPH BEUYS.





*Jasper Johns painting his first flag, Pearl Street 1954*

2008, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 140 × 160 cm

*For personal non-commercial use*

2009, Oil paintstick on canvas, 180 × 140 cm



FOR PERSONAL NON-COMMERCIAL USE ONLY

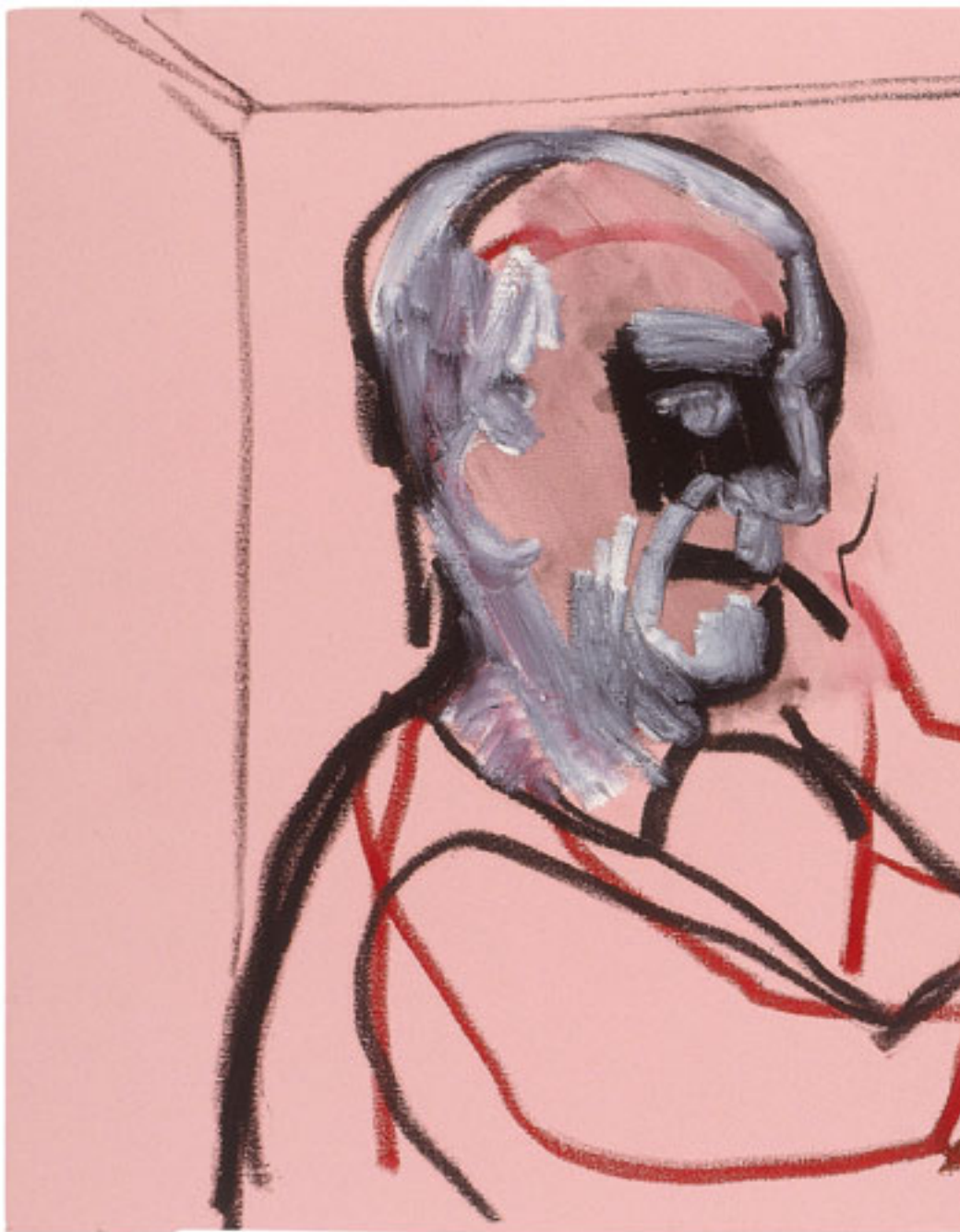
*Josef Albers having a sunny side up*

2010, Oil and oil paintstick on paper, 110 × 70 cm,

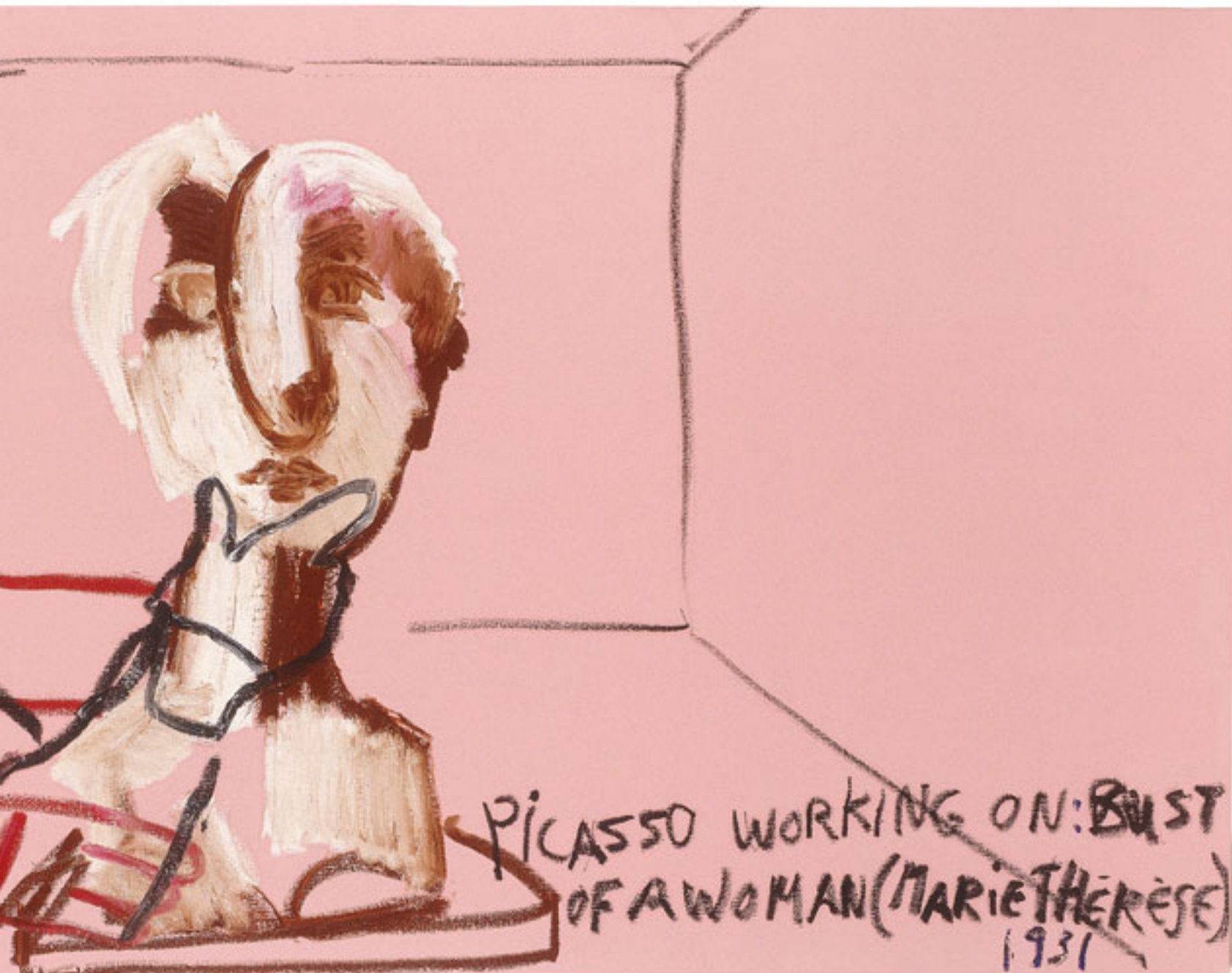




JOSEF ALBERS HAVING A SUNNY  
SIDE UP.



*Picasso working on a bust of a woman (Marie Therese) 1931*  
2009, Acrylic and oil paintstick on canvas, 120 × 190 cm



PICASSO WORKING ON: BUST  
OF A WOMAN (MARIE THERESE)  
1931

*Picasso taking a nap in front of a blank canvas*

2008, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 110 × 88 cm



PICASSO IS TAKING  
A MAP IN FRONT OF  
A BLANK CANVAS.



*Gilbert & George*

2010, Oil paintstick on paper, 110 × 70 cm



GILBERT & GEORGE

1973

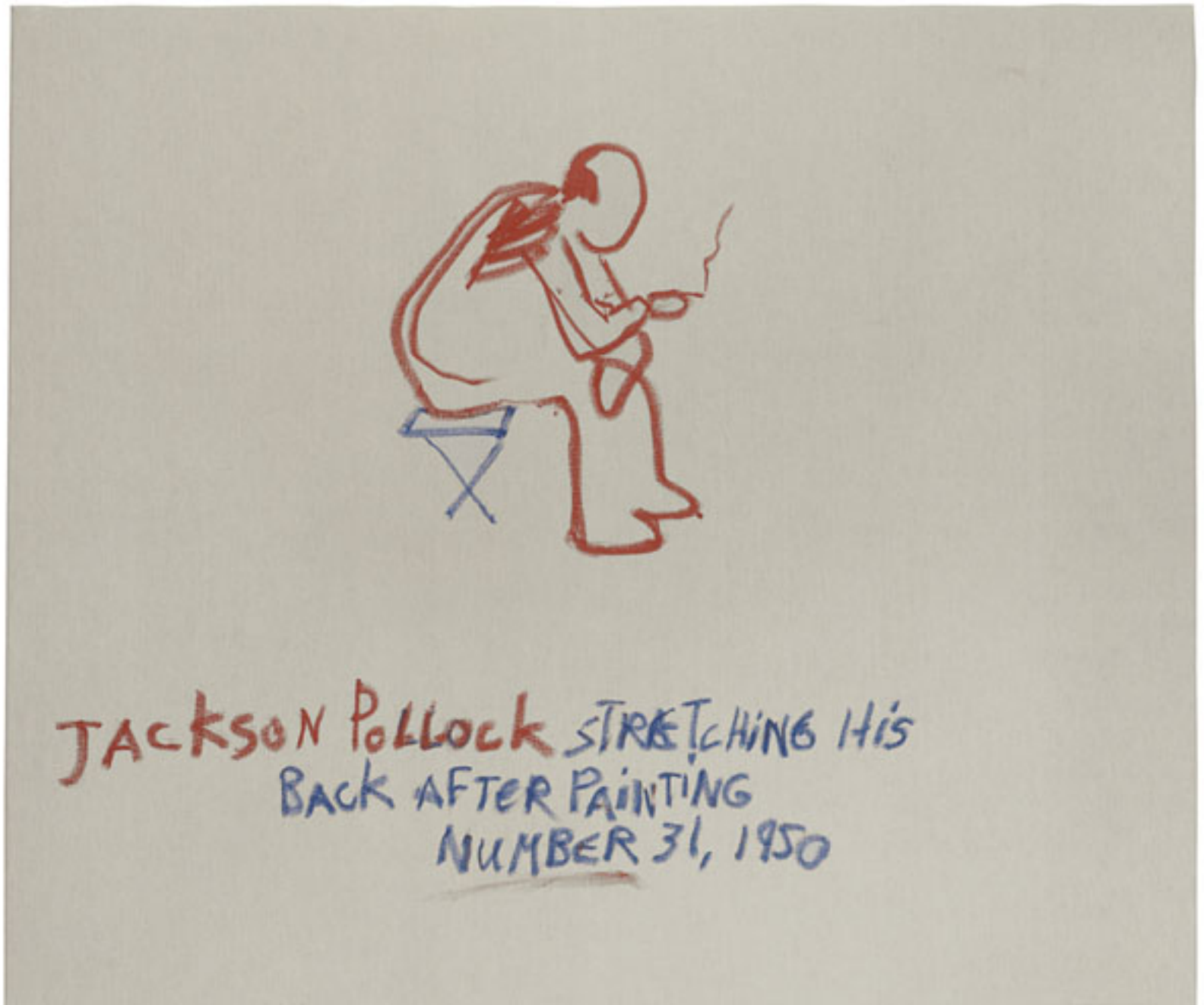
*Piet Mondrian crossing the Atlantic*

2008, Acrylic and oil paintstick on prepared linen, 140 × 150 cm



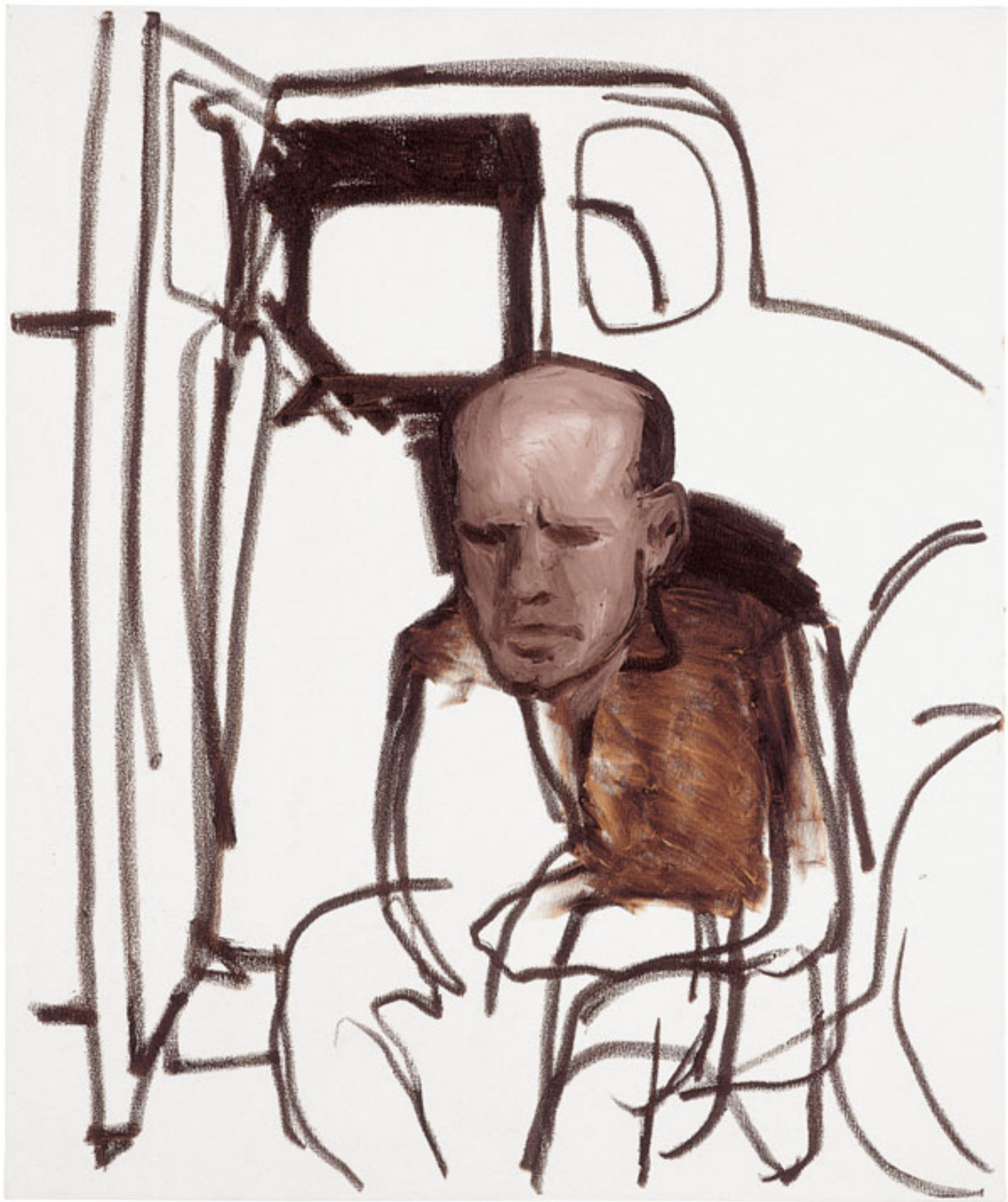


PIET MONDRIAN CROSSING THE ATLANTIC



*Jackson Pollock stretching his back after painting number 31, 1950*  
2009, Oil paintstick on fabric, 100 × 120 cm

*Jackson Pollock*  
2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 120 × 100 cm



*Sigmar Polke in the North Pole, 1968*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm





*What if Andy Warhol would have been living and working in the Middle East?*

2008, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 120 × 110 cm



WHAT IF **ANDY** WARHOL WOULD HAVE  
BEEN LIVING AND WORKING IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST?

## II ARCHITECTS



*Frank Gehry*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



FRANK  
GERRY

*Norman Foster*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



N. Foster

*Frank Lloyd Wright*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



*Zaha Hadid*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm





ZAHARA



*Herzog & de Meuron*

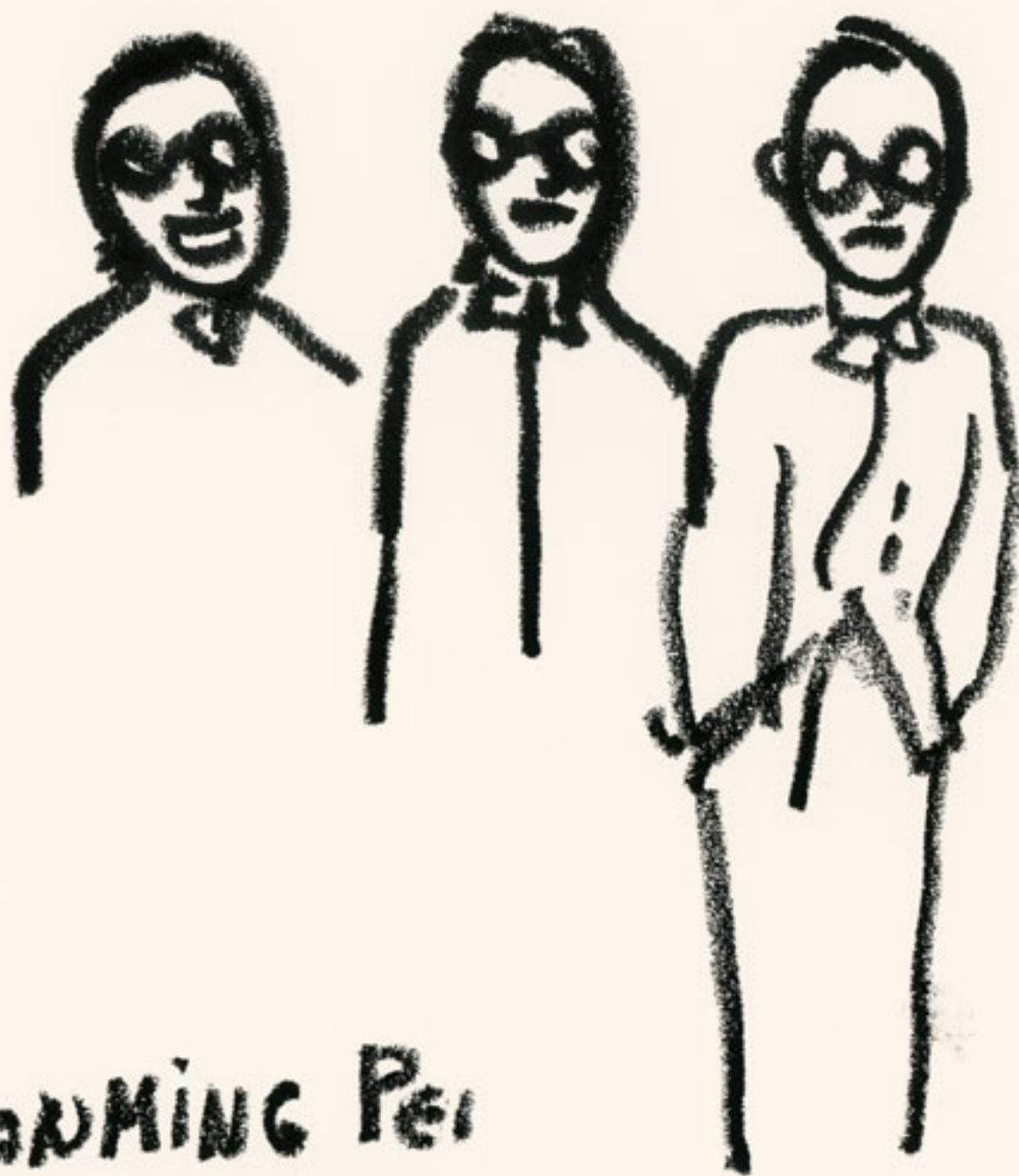
2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



HERZOG & MERRON

*I.M. Pei, Philip Johnson and Le Corbusier*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



LEONMING PEI  
PHILIP JOHNSON  
LE CORBUSIER

*Mies van der Rohe*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



MIËS VANDER RAHE

# III FASHION DESIGNERS



*Ralph Lauren in one of his creations*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



**RALPH LAUREN**  
**IN ONE OF HIS CREATIONS**

*Isaac Mizrahi trying one of his creations*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



*Tom Ford*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

T.M.F.





*John Galiano*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

*John Galiano trying on one of his creations*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm





*Todd Oldham 2007*

2010, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



TODD OLDHAM 2007

*Valentino*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

VALENTINO



*Dolce & Gabbana*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



DOLCE & GABBANA





*Calvin Klein*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

C. KLEIN



*Alexander McQueen trying one of his creations*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm



ALEX. MCQUEEN TRYING  
NONE OF HIS CREATIONS

*YSL*

2011, Oil paintstick on paper, 29.7 × 21 cm

57





## IV JOHN AND YOKO

*John and Yoko*

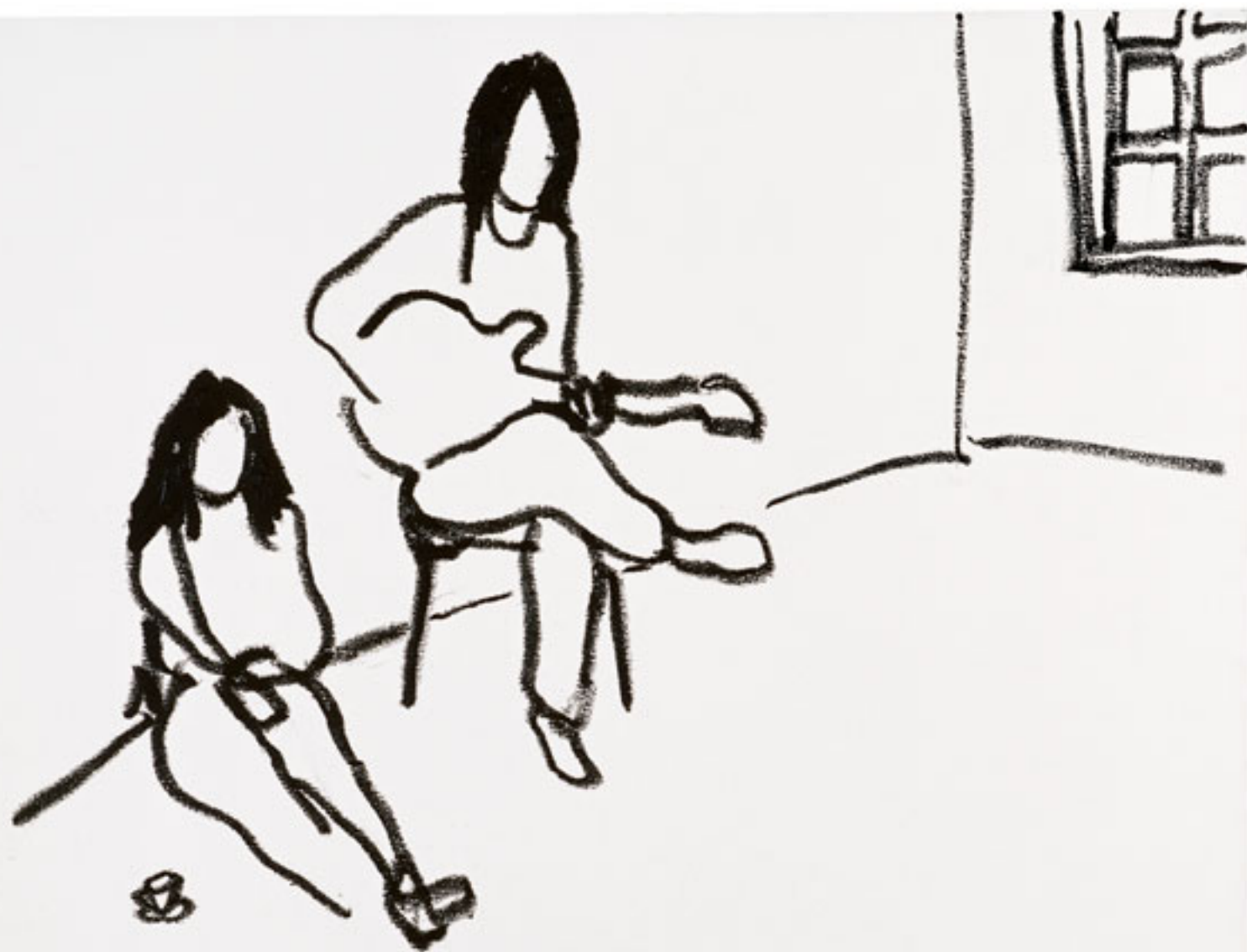
2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 110 × 100 cm



JOHN & YOKO

*John and Yoko, Abbey Road, 1968*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 110 × 100 cm



JOHN & YOKO ABBY-  
ROAD 1968

*John and Yoko, black cab London, 68*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm



JOHN & Yoko  
LONDON 68



*John and Yoko, New Year's Eve, 1968*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm



JOHN & YOKO, NEW YEAR'S EVE. 1968  
N.Y.C.

*John and Yoko, Regent Street*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm



JOHN & Yoko

*John and Yoko, Central Park Sunday morning, 1968*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm,





JOAN S. YOKO, CENTRAL PARK, N.Y. C  
1968

*John and Yoko, Central Park, New York City*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm





JOHN AND YOKO  
CENTRAL PARK N.Y.C.

*John and Yoko, London, 1968*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm



JOHN & YOKO  
LONDON 1968

*John and Yoko, New York City, 1968*

2010, Oil paintstick on canvas, 100 × 80 cm



JOHN AND YOKO  
N.Y.C. 1968

## V MUSEUM ART WORLD

*A museum director descending a staircase*

2009, Oil and oil paintstick on prepared linen, 170 × 120 cm





*Ten seconds*

2009, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 160 × 120 cm



PEOPLE-WHEN THEY GO TO MUSEUMS  
SPEND AN AVERAGE OF TEN <sup>10</sup>  
SECONDS WITH EACH WORK AND  
HALF OF THAT TIME IS SPENT ~~READ~~  
READING THE LABEL.

*The gallerist and her new star*

2008, Acrylic and oil paintstick on prepared linen, 120 × 100 cm



THE GALLERY AND HER NEW STAFF

*Francois Pinault in Venice, 2008*

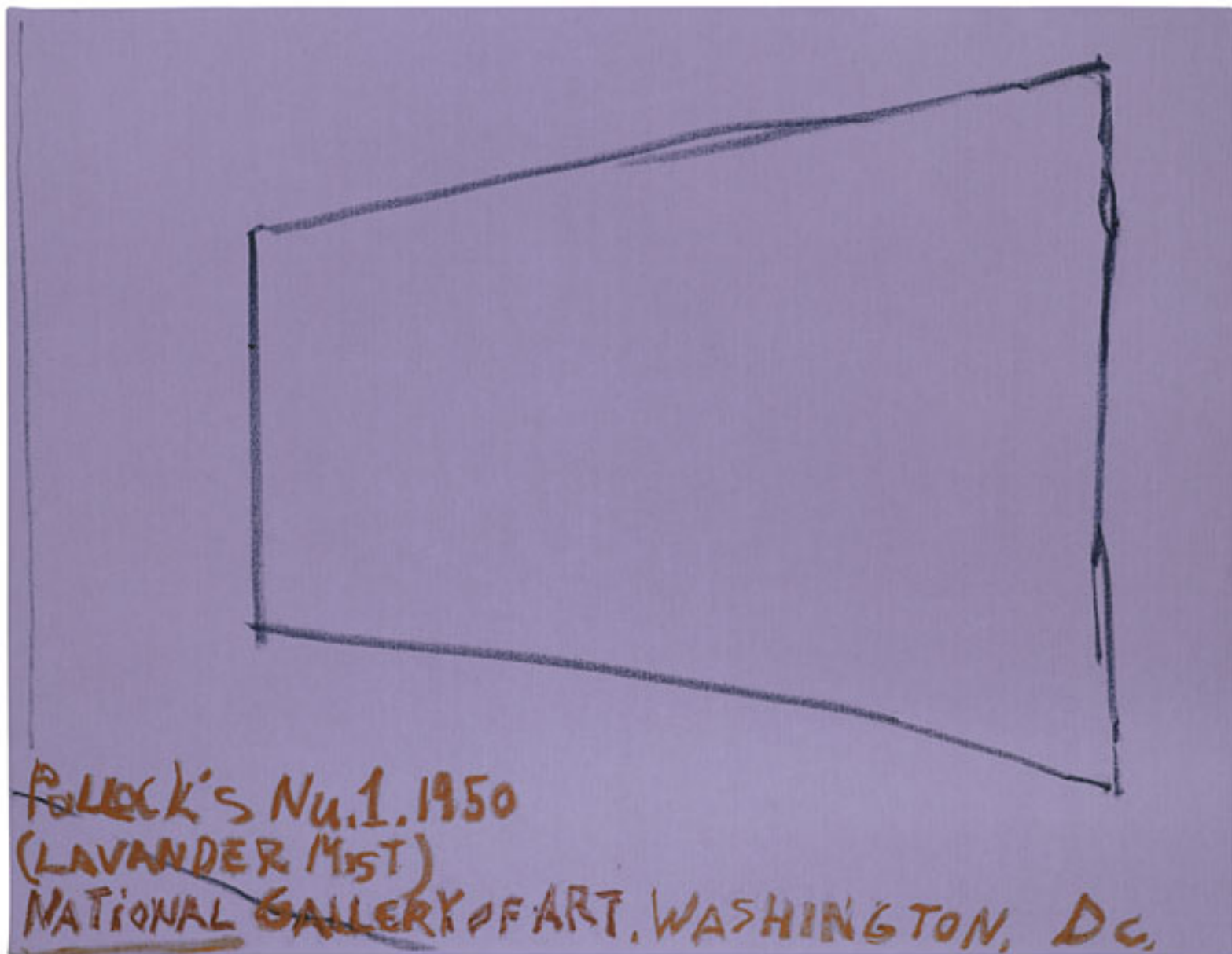
2010, Oil paintstick on paper, 110 × 70 cm





FRANCOIS PINAULT IN VENICE 2008



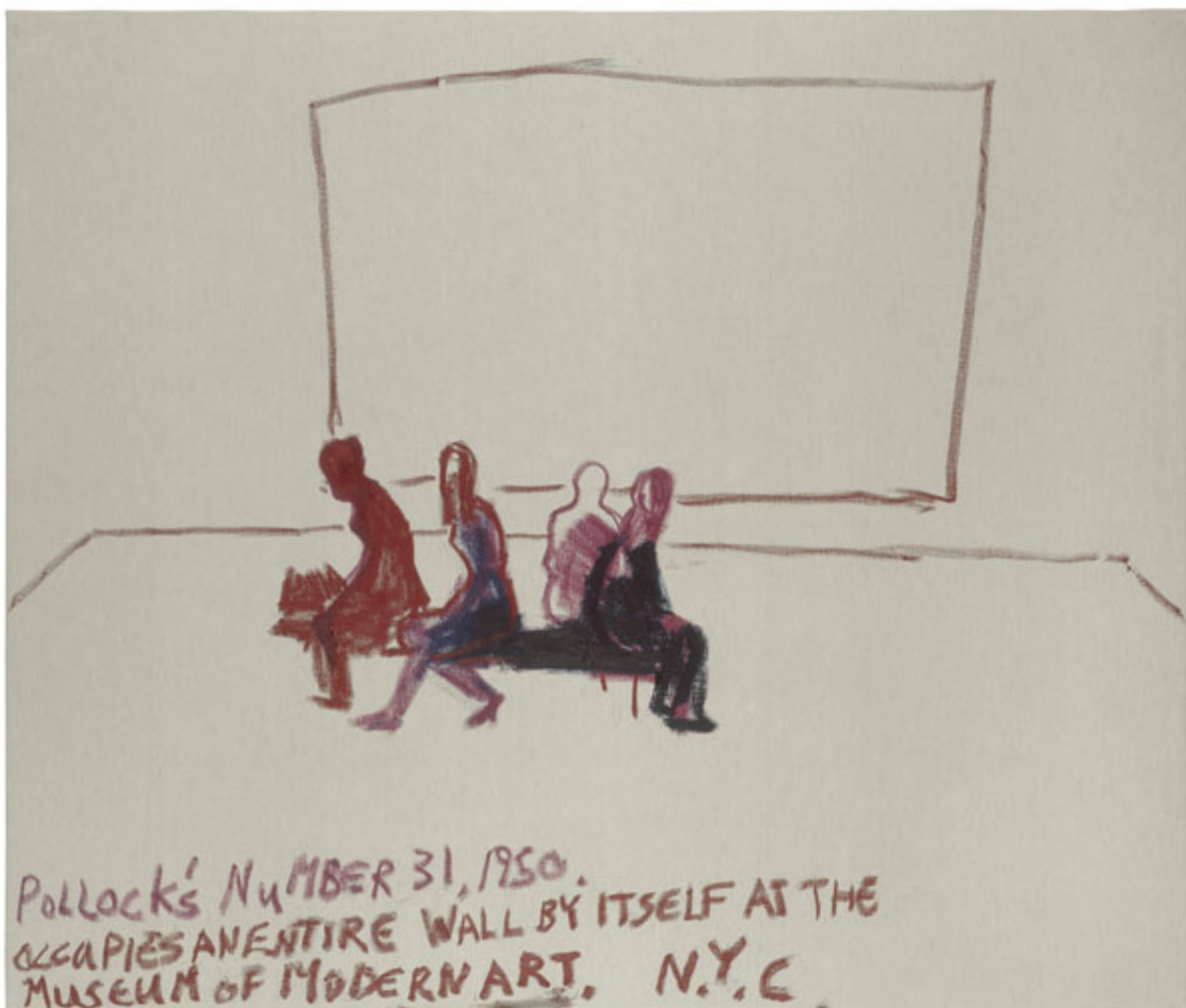


*Pollock's no. 1, 1950*

2009, Oil paintstick on fabric, 110 × 120 cm

*Pollock's no. 31, 1950*

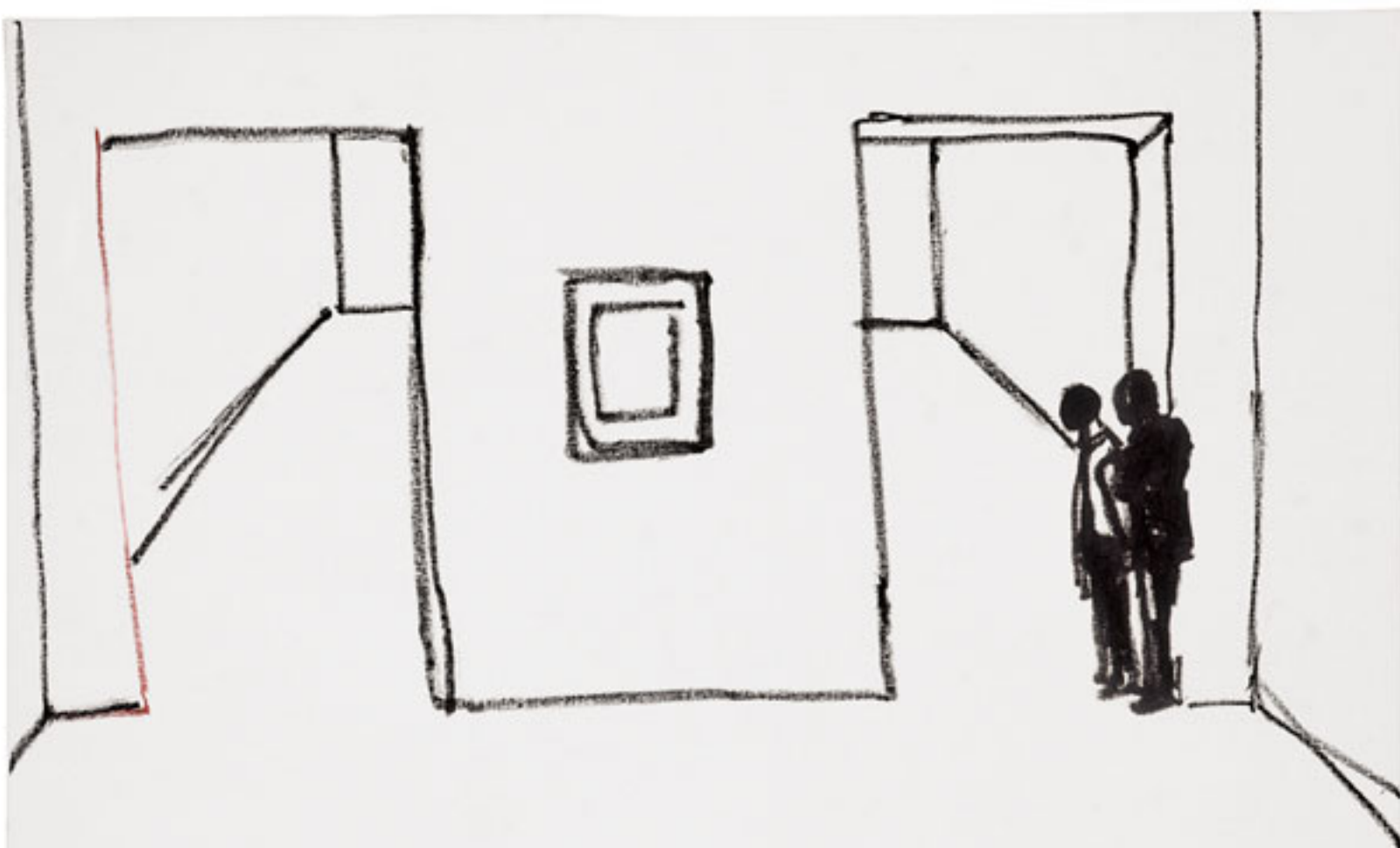
2009, Oil paintstick on fabric, 110 × 120 cm



POLLOCK'S NUMBER 31, 1950.  
OCCUPIES AN ENTIRE WALL BY ITSELF AT THE  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. N.Y.C.

*Van Gogh, vase with twelve sunflowers, Arles, January 1889*

2009, Oil paintstick on prepared linen, 120 × 140 cm



VAN Gogh, VASE WITH  
TWELVE SUNFLOWERS, ARLES,  
JANUARY 1889.

*One of Lichtenstein's source images taken from a newspaper, 1964*

2009, Oil paintstick on canvas, 160 × 120 cm



ONE OF LICHTENSTEIN'S SOURCE  
IMAGES TAKEN FROM A NEWSPAPER

1964

*Post-war and contemporary evening*

2009, Oil and oil paintstick on canvas, 140 × 160 cm







Aellie Zoe, Mika, Adam, Eran Shakine and Maya Kadishman-Shakine

# Biography

Eran Shakine is an artist, who works in different mediums; these include painting, drawing, sculpture and site-specific public art.

He was born in 1962 in Israel to a French father and Hungarian mother; both are Holocaust survivors who came to Israel after the Second World War.

He has lived in Paris, London and for seven years in New York City, where he received the “Art Matters” Scholarship and was the assistant of the COBRA movement artist, Karel Appel.

He has had one-man shows in The Drawing Center in New York as well as in London, Paris, Brussels, Toronto and Tel Aviv.

His works are in the permanent collections of the British Museum, London; Ludwig Museum, Aachen, Germany; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel and the Israel Museum, Jerusalem as well as many corporate and private collections.

He lives between Tel Aviv and London with his wife Maya and their children Aellie Zoe, Mika and Adam.

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LEARN ART IT MIGHT BE  
USEFUL TO YOU ONE DAY.

Nuit Banai Ed.

# Eran Shakin Sunny Side Up

Edition J. B. Tesch

Hirmer



THIS BOOK WILL CHANGE ~~YOUR~~  
NOTHING IN YOUR LIFE.  
MY APOLOGIES  
E.S.

Z

Zemack  
Contemporary  
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