



William Brice, *Untitled*, 1960, charcoal on paper, 16 3/4 x 21 1/2 in. (42.5 x 54.6 cm)

WILLIAM BRICE

Drawings 1960 - 1985

17 November - 30 December, 2010

Opening reception: Wednesday, 17 November, 6-8 p.m.

Venice, CA – L.A. Louver is pleased to announce an exhibition of drawings by **William Brice** (1921-2008). The show includes works from throughout the height, and most productive period, of Brice’s career: 1960-1985.

The exhibition embraces Brice’s full range of expression in representing the female form, with drawings that convey the artist’s joy and understanding of his subject. Early 1960s works focus on posed female nudes: solitary, contemplative figures situated in indeterminate interiors or gardens, conveyed in charcoal or graphite, with little or no color. A shift occurs in the mid-1960s, with Brice’s newfound interest in Matisse: works such as the pastel *Untitled*, 1967, exemplify his incorporation of both a brighter palette and a flatter approach to modeling figures.

A trip to Greece in 1970, with his wife Shirley and son John, proved seminal in the development of his work. Brice shot numerous photographs of the ruins that he encountered in profusion, and in these remnants of classical antiquity he found the inspiration to articulate universal human experience in elemental form. Greece led Brice to his “signature style,” which Howard N. Fox describes in his catalogue essay as “a new mode of abstraction that intersected his greater daring to present erotic subjects.” Brice’s abstracted body parts “like pictograms or hieroglyphs or talismans...were no longer the referents of the models whose bodies he drew and painted. Instead of belonging to his sitters, they were now the proprietary ‘stuff’ of his own visual vocabulary and artistic imagination.” The exhibition includes *Untitled*, 1974, charcoal on paper, that conveys a female torso and haunch in both frontal and side views, and a fine selection of late ’70s and early ’80s abstracted compositions. Breasts, buttocks, swollen bellies and prominent phallic and vulval forms pervade the work Brice made through the remainder of his life, and contain, as Fox perceives, an “inscrutable mysteriousness” – not to be understood or adjudged, but to be recognized.

The son of famed comedian and Broadway star Fanny Brice, and Jules “Nicky” Arnstein, William Brice was born in 1921 in New York City. Raised in a rarified creative environment, surrounded by performers, musicians and artists, Brice acquired an early art education through frequent visits to museums in New York City and to the great cities of Western Europe. Encouraged by his mother to pursue his passion to paint, Brice took private classes from Henry Botkin, with whom he had a life-long friendship until Botkin’s death in 1983. Brice went on to study at the Art Students League, New York and at Chouinard Art Institute and Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles (the Brice family moved to Beverly Hills when William was 16).



William Brice, *Untitled*, 1967, pastel on paper, 25 x 19 in. (63.5 x 48.3 cm)



William Brice, *Untitled*, 1974, charcoal on paper, 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.7 cm)

In 1942, Brice worked for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios designing sets and painting “masterpieces” for movies. A brief stint in the Army Air Corps was followed by a return to painting, and in 1947, Brice was awarded his first one-person exhibition at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Two years later, his first solo commercial gallery show was held at Downtown Gallery, New York, and was soon followed by his 1951 debut solo show in Los Angeles at Frank Perls Gallery. Subsequent exhibitions included Felix Landau and Nicholas Wilder Galleries. From 1980 onwards, L.A. Louver represented Brice, and four exhibitions were mounted, in 1984, 1989, 1990 and 1998. Solo exhibitions also included University of California, San Diego (traveled to Santa Barbara Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Art, Dallas Museum of Art and Colorado Springs Fine Center) in 1967; Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art in 1978; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 1986 (traveled to the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University); Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1990; and UCLA’s Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts in 1993.

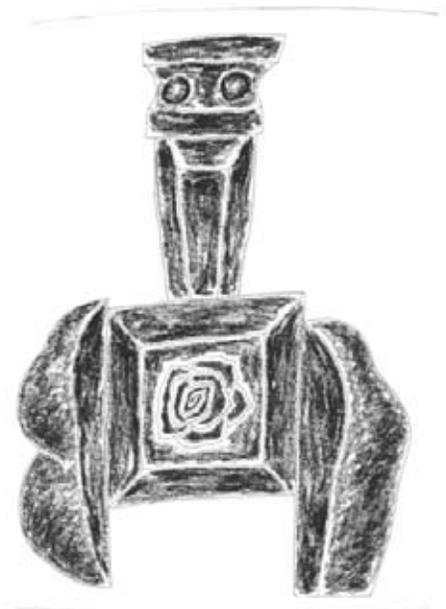
A much beloved and influential teacher for over four decades, Brice first taught at Jepson Art Institute (1948-1953) before joining the art department of the University of California, Los Angeles in 1953, where he remained for 38 years, earning the title Professor Emeritus in 1991.

Brice’s work may be found in more than thirty public collections throughout the United States, including Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, and UCLA Art Collection, Hammer Museum, UCLA in Los Angeles, California; Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California; Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

William Brice: *Drawings 1960-1985* is accompanied by a full color, 160-page hardbound book that reproduces all works in the exhibition. The publication includes an essay entitled “Revelatory Nature: The Art of William Brice” by Howard N. Fox, curator emeritus of contemporary art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, a detailed illustrated chronology of the artist’s life by John Brice (son of the artist) and Bonnie Earls-Solari, foreword by Peter Goulds, Founding Director, L.A. Louver, and introduction by Kimberly Davis, Director, L.A. Louver.

Second floor gallery: FIGURATION: *Paintings and Drawings*, including works by Tony Bevan, William Brice, Rebecca Campbell, Richard Diebenkorn, Charles Garabedian, David Hockney, R. B. Kitaj, Leon Kossoff and Alice Neel.

Skyroom: Richard Deacon, *North Tree and Rock*



William Brice, *Untitled*, 1979-1997, circa, charcoal and ink on paper, 24 x 18, in. (61 x 45.7 cm)

For more information and visuals, please contact Elizabeth East, L.A. Louver, 45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA, USA; www.lalouer.com; tel: 310-822-4955; fax: 310-821-7529; e-mail: Elizabeth@lalouer.com

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