

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 27th, 2017

Fritz Scholder: Figures of Paradox

Exhibition Dates: June 9 –
July 23, 2017

Artist Reception: Fri, June 30, 5 – 7 pm

Gallery Hours: Mon – Fri, 10-6
Sat, 10-5

LewAllen Galleries

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*American Portrait #46, 1982,
Oil on canvas, 80 x 68 in*



*White Indian, 1997,
Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 68 in*

Santa Fe, NM - LewAllen Galleries is honored to present a historically significant, first-of-its-kind exhibition of paintings, bronze sculpture and works on paper from three of the world's most prominent private collections of Fritz Scholder works: the Fritz Scholder Estate, the Lisa Scholder Collection, and the Romona Scholder Collection. The artist considered many of the works to be of such iconic significance that they have remained in his private collection and are only now being exhibited for the first time outside of the unprecedented two-city posthumous retrospective presented simultaneously in New York and Washington, D.C. by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in 2008 and 2009.

Entitled *Fritz Scholder: Figures of Paradox*, the show hangs on June 9 and opens formally with a reception on June 30. It will remain on view for six weeks until July 23. This thoughtfully curated exhibition explores the renowned artist's creative

energies – rooted in paradox – through his multi-faceted engagement with the human figure, and illustrates more generally the extraordinary virtuosity of work that has made Scholder one of the most accomplished innovators of post-World War II American Modernism. These works span every decade from 1964 until 2004, the year before the artist's death.

Included are several works illustrating Scholder's famed ground-breaking reinvention of the way Native Americans are portrayed in fine art. Scholder's images departed radically from traditional, stereotypical depictions of the mythic Indian. Always controversial, Scholder came to prominence while teaching at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe in the mid-1960s where he became committed to a new conceptualization of contemporary Native American art.

Although one-quarter Native American and an enrolled member of the Luiseño tribe from California, Scholder was also of European heritage. Ultimately he recoiled against traditional and sentimental artistic representations of Indians as “noble savages” or “brute warriors” and resolved to humanize the imagery and “paint the Indian real, not red.” Credited with having “broken the mold,” these images and the spirit of artistic independence they represented earned Scholder worldwide recognition.

Other works in the exhibition exemplify later interests in more gestural and abstracted approaches to expressing the figural form and explore broader mysteries and enigmas of the human experience, imagination and psyche. Themes appear involving dream-like and mythic characters with powerful erotic or occult energy and referencing connections to ancient as well as more modern cultures, the natural world as well as realms of the magical. Works from this part of Scholder's career illustrate a style that became known for its evocative distortions, explosive brushwork and vivid colors.



*Indian Land #4, 1980,
Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 68 in*

Of special note in this exhibition are several self-portraits that comprise some of the most intense, and intriguing paintings Scholder created. These include the majestic “American Portrait” from 1982 that presents an apparitional image of Scholder that is both haunting and beautiful. The last self-portrait he painted, the dramatic “Self Portrait with Grey Cat,” shows a Baconesque Scholder hooked to oxygen and defiantly seated in the face of disease that would take his life in less than two years. It is characteristically full of mystery and subtle metaphoric reference.

Scholder is credited with being a superlative colorist and with innovating a new kind of figuration that

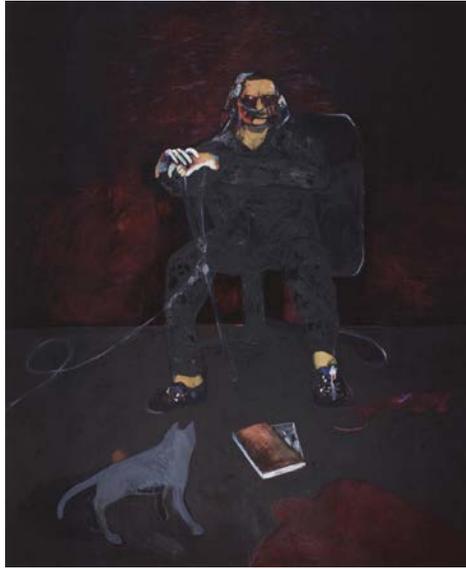


*Matinee Cowboy and Horse, 1976,
Lithograph, 30 x 22 in*

united in his own style Pop cultural references, the gestural expressionism of the Bay Area Figurative artists, and arresting distortion of physiognomy inspired by Francis Bacon. These he combined with his own conceptual engagement with Native American identity and psychologically charged themes. The exhibition also includes two 1980 acrylic on canvas portraits of Fritz Scholder painted by Andy Warhol, who Scholder considered a major inspiration.

Considered one of the most important figures of 20th century American art, Scholder's work is represented in major collections throughout the world including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Chicago Art Institute, the Dallas Museum of Art, the museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Brooklyn Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Museum of American Art of the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, among others.

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Self Portrait with Grey Cat, 2003,
Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 68 in



Portrait of a Shaman, 1984,
Bronze, 42 ½ x 29 ½ x 23 ½ in