

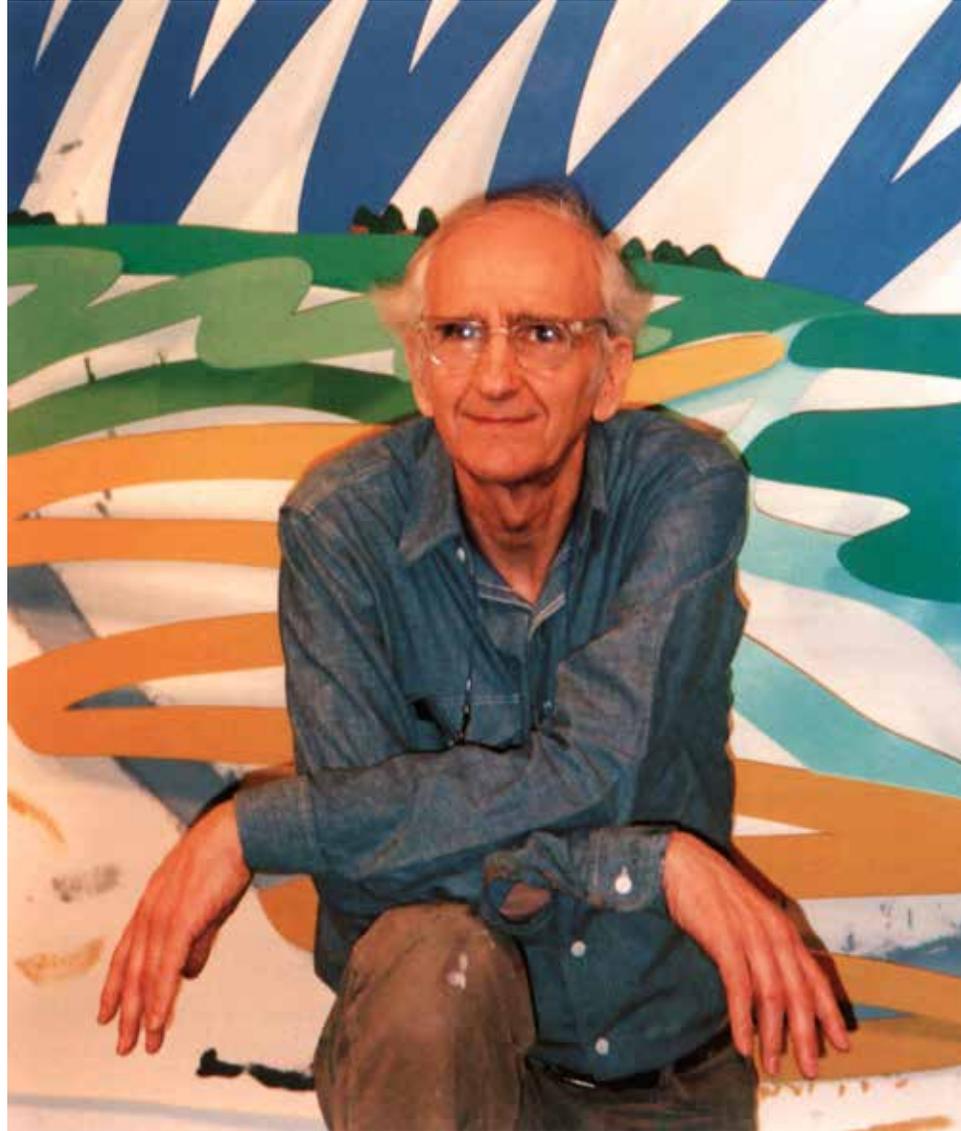


TOM WESSELMANN

WORKS ON PAPER - STEEL DRAWINGS - SCREENPRINTS - PAINTINGS

SAMUEL VANHOEGAERDEN GALLERY

TOM WESSELMANN



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AUGUST 2 – SEPTEMBER 15, 2013

SAMUEL VANHOEGAERDEN GALLERY – KNOKKE – 2013
Zeedijk 720 – 8300 Knokke – Belgium
www.svhgallery.be – info@svhgallery.be



FOREWORD

Tom Wesselmann's imagery has become an iconic logo of late twentieth century art. He has been given a solid place in art history based on his authenticity and through his ground-breaking, fresh and brilliant variations on the themes of the nude, still-lives and landscapes. From his first tiny collages in the beginning of the sixties, to his Great American Nudes, his smokers, his spontaneous and casual doodles to his beautiful metal drawings, Wesselmann remained in the forefront of art history, and always remained true to his early creative ideals and tendencies. Along with Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann will forever be associated with the genesis and the best of New York's Pop Art movement.

The years following Wesselmann's death were marked by a renewed interest in his work with exhibitions in the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma , the Montreal Museum Of Fine Arts and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. He exhibited worldwide continually since the early 1960s and his works are included in museum collections throughout the world.

Samuel Vanhoegaerden

[1]

Little Still Life # 4, LSL4, 1962

Mixed technique and collage on wood
20,3 x 25,4 cm
Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Jim Dine, New York
Emiel Veranneman, Belgium
Private Collection, Belgium

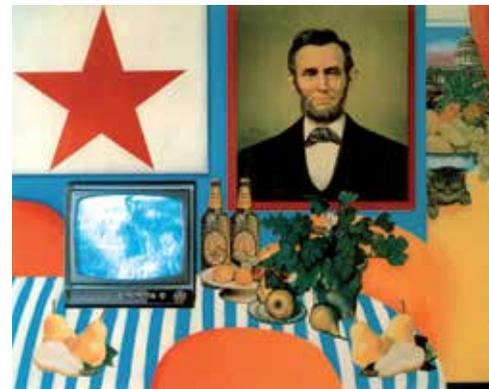
EXHIBITIONS:

Tanager Gallery, New York, May, 1962

In 1962 Wesselmann had begun working on a new series of still lifes, experimenting with assemblage as well as with collage. In these early collages, Tom Wesselmann processed interiors that allow the viewer a glimpse into a private and closed world, with pieces of scenery taken from everyday American life. Hamburgers with American flags, images from magazines, Coca-Cola bottles, Soup cans, apartment interiors or a table and chair in a kitchen.

“I was doing these strange little paintings, these collages; I guess I’d done about four, five or six. The first living artist to set eyes on them was Jimmy Dine who came down one day. He said “You may be one of America’s great painters.” That never occurred to me. It was a very important thing he said to me. It was quite helpful; gave my morale a boost because I wasn’t sure.”

Interview with Tom Wesselmann, 1984 Jan. 3-Feb. 8, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Still Life #28, 1963, private collection.



[2]

Drawing for Still Life #47, 1964

Graphite on paper
75,5 x 79,5 cm
Signed and dated

EXHIBITIONS:

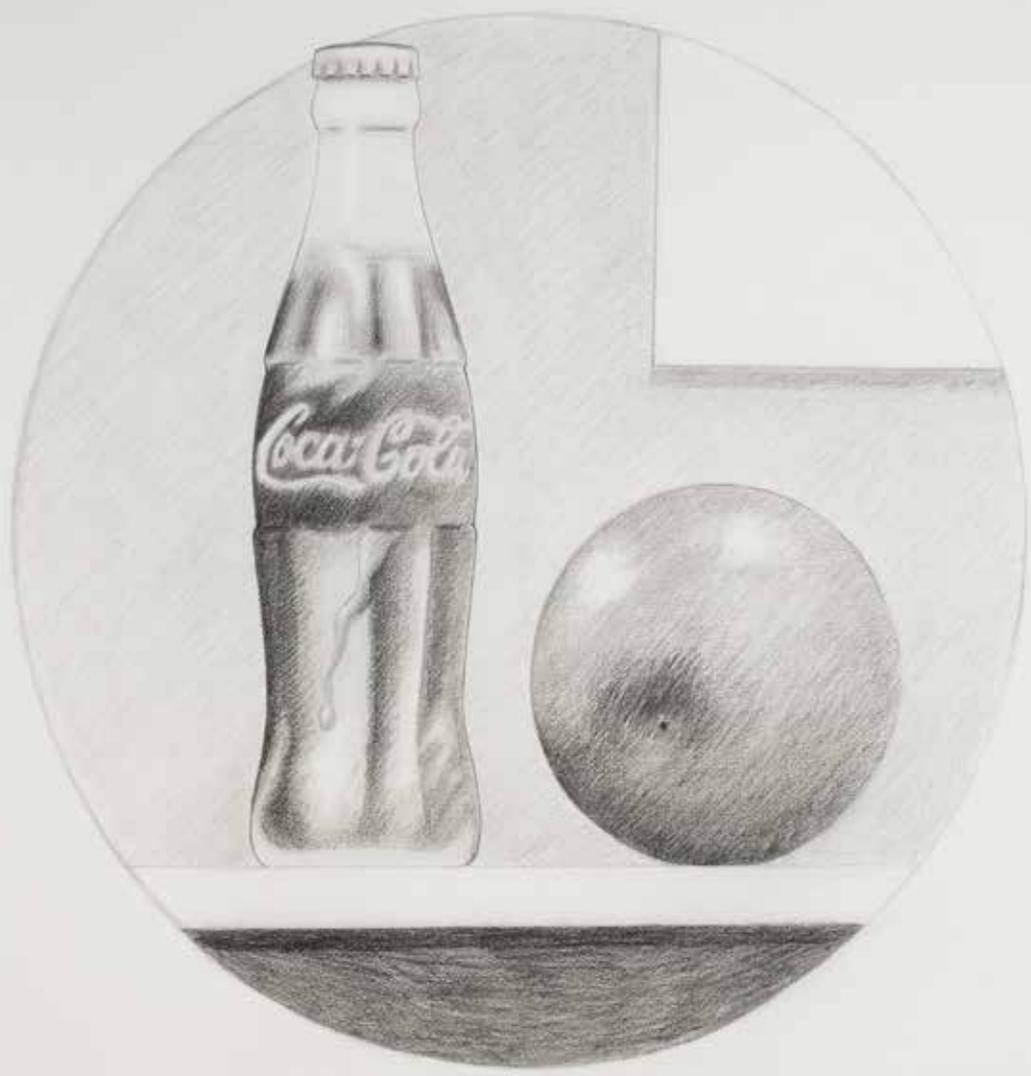
Newport Beach, Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1970-1971

Dedicated "To Tom Garver". He wrote the introduction in "Tom Wesselmann: Early Still Lives: 1962-1964", for an exhibition organized by the Newport Harbor Art Museum, Balboa, California, from December 9, 1970-January 10, 1971, and at the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Mo., February 12-March 14, 1971.

The Coca-Cola brand has long fascinated pop artists such as Mel Ramos, Peter Blake, Andy Warhol and also Tom Wesselmann. It can be argued that even the first advertisements commissioned by Coca Cola have the allure of true works of art, beyond the message they were designed to evoke. Painters and photographers have depicted Coca-Cola advertisements and the brand continues to attract contemporary artists to convey their image. At the same time, the Coca-Cola bottle itself appears to have become a great twentieth century icon alongside Marilyn Monroe's face...



Mel Ramos, Lola Cola, 1972.
© Mel Ramos.



[3]

Study for Great American Nude #90, 1966

Liquitex on paper
46,4 x 55,2 cm
Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
David Janis Gallery, New York
Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York

This Study for Great American Nude #90 is a final study for a painting from the artist's iconic Great American Nude series. These works were first shown at the Tanager Gallery in 1961 and he ceased this most famous series with #100 in 1973.

This portrait of Wesselmann's wife and model, Claire Selley, is a paradigm of the sexual revolution in the USA that was just beginning. Wesselmann often testified that he found sex to be an integral part of his life.



*Poster from the Look
At series published by
Galerie Thomas in 1968.*



[4]

Nude with Tongue out, 1967

Pencil on rag paper
37,5 x 38 cm
Signed and dated

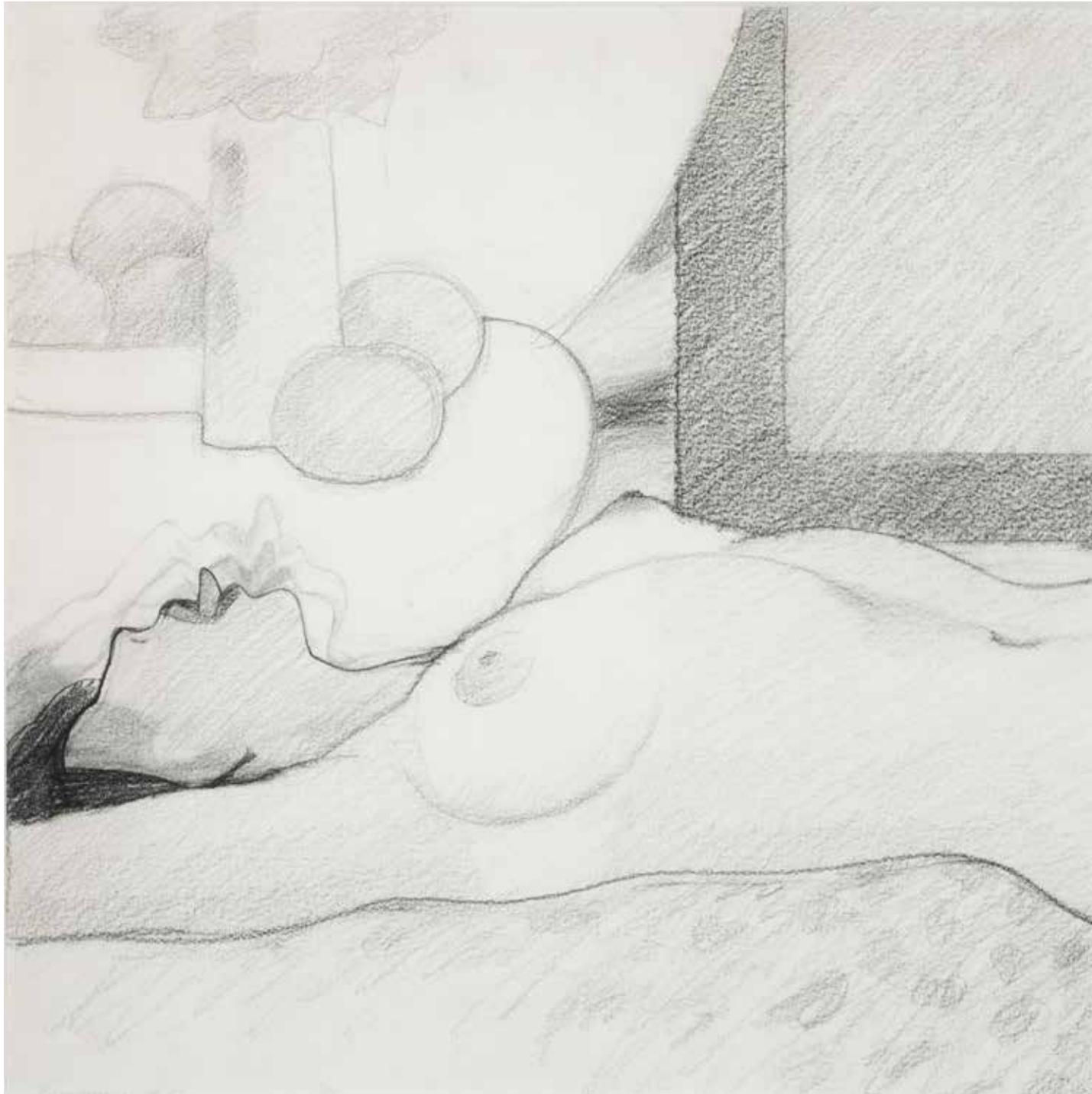
PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery

Tom Wesselmann has been routinely characterized as a superb draftsman and the drawings of the 1960's are his most important works from an art historical perspective. "Drawing still lifes or landscapes was never as difficult as drawing nudes", Wesselmann has said. "If the proportions of the figures look wrong, they immediately strike viewers as incorrect, and thus implausible in a way that is less likely in a still life or study of the countryside".



Detail of Study for the Great American Nude, #87, 1966, former collection Hugh Hefner, Playboy Magazine.



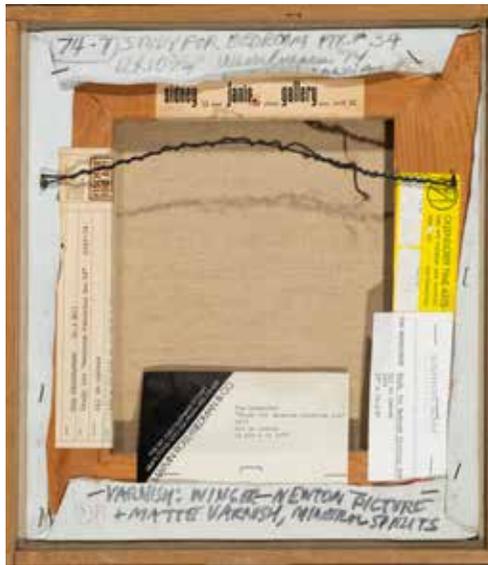
[5]

Study for Bedroom Painting #34, 1967-74

Oil on canvas
30,5 x 27,3 cm
Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Verso of 'Study for Bedroom Painting #34'.

In the *Bedroom Painting* series are the elements of the Great American Nude, Still Lives and Seascapes juxtaposed. With these works Wesselmann began to concentrate on a few details of the figure such as hands, feet, and breasts, surrounded by flowers and objects. In these works the objects are small in relation to the nude, but become major, even dominant elements when the central element is a body part and even though the images show no sexual intimacies, they still give free rein to all sorts of erotic associations.



[6]

Multiple study for Bedroom Painting # 32, 1971

Oil on canvas

26,7 x 40,8 cm

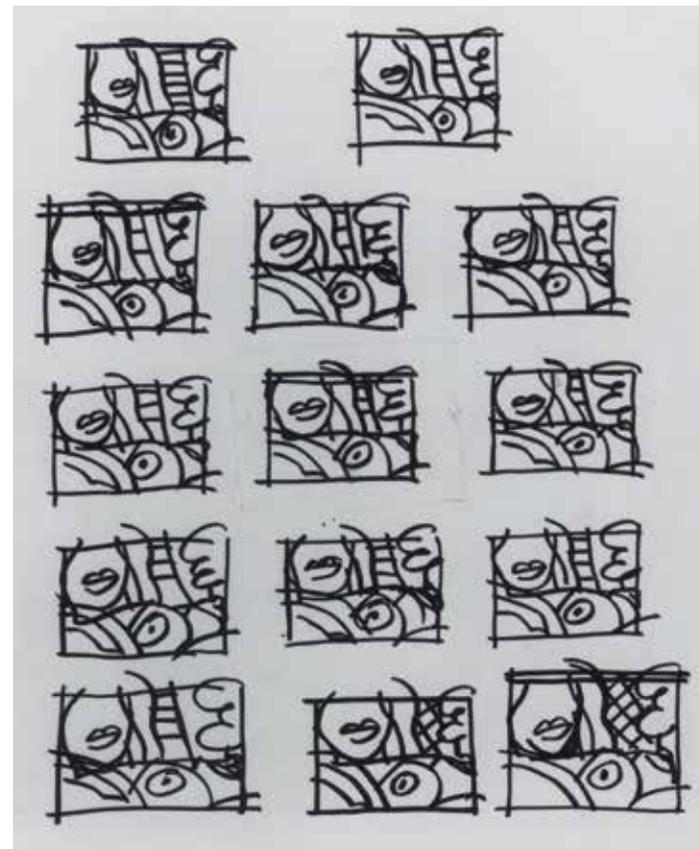
Signed and dated on the verso

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

The Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester, New York

Galerie Andy Julien, Zürich, Switzerland



The idea of putting multiple images on a single canvas is typical in the Pop Art movement. Wesselmann makes different variations on each drawing to explore the image profoundly.

Page of Doodles for Nude with Green Drape, 1985.



[?]

Study for Smoker Lithograph (Study #3), 1975

Liquitex and graphite on 100% ragpaper
38,1 x 56,8 cm
signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
Private Collection, Paris
Collection of David C. Copley, La Jolla, California

From observation of his model for the *Mouth* series, Wesselmann started drawing smokers in the late sixties. These smokers became more complex in the seventies when he introduced the hand with polished fingernails sparkling in the smoke. The perfectly made-up mouth, the hovering smoke and the sensual parted lips bring blown-up advertising clichés to mind, which derive their effect from the use of erotic symbols. So became this *Smoker Study* series one of the most recurrent themes in the 1970s.



Mouth # 7, 1966.



[8]

Tiny Dropped Bra #35, 1978

Construction, liquitex/cut paper in Plexiglas box

16,5 x 36,8 x 10,2 cm

Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis, New York

Maxwell Davidson Gallery, New York

It was in 1978 that Tom Wesselmann got interested in sculptural work. One of the first works he made in maquette was the dropped bra, of which he made a large scale sculpture that is now in the gardens of the Contemporary Museum of Honolulu, Hawaii.





[9]

Tiny shoe and tulip # 29, 1980-1984

liquitex on bristol board in plexi box

13 x 16 x 8,5 cm

Signed and dated on verso

PROVENANCE:

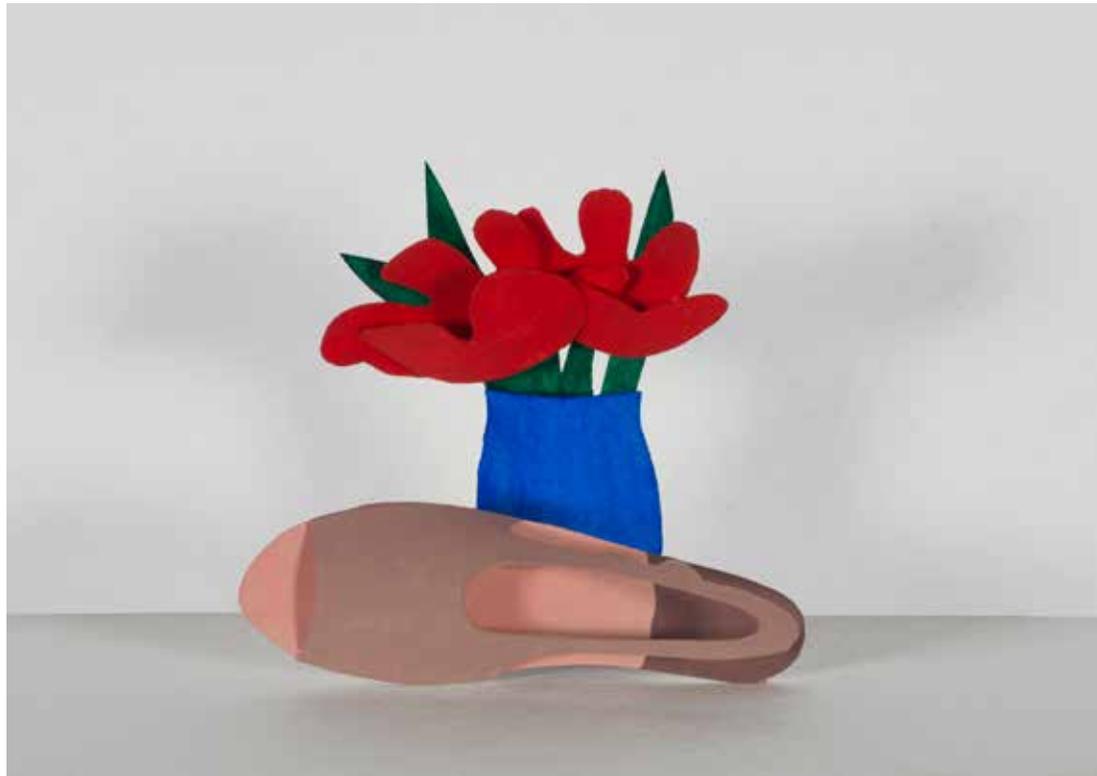
Sold through Sidney Janis 1987.

From a hand-made sequence of 35, with no two painted alike.

As Tom Wesselmann was constantly experimenting with new ideas and new media, he brought the expansion of the still life beyond painting into multidimensional sculptural forms. These 3d – objects and later the steel drawings are an evolution on his earlier collages, assemblages and shaped canvases.



Verso of this work.



[10]

Beautiful Kate (Blonde; red stockings), 1982

Pencil and Liquitex on 100 % rag paper

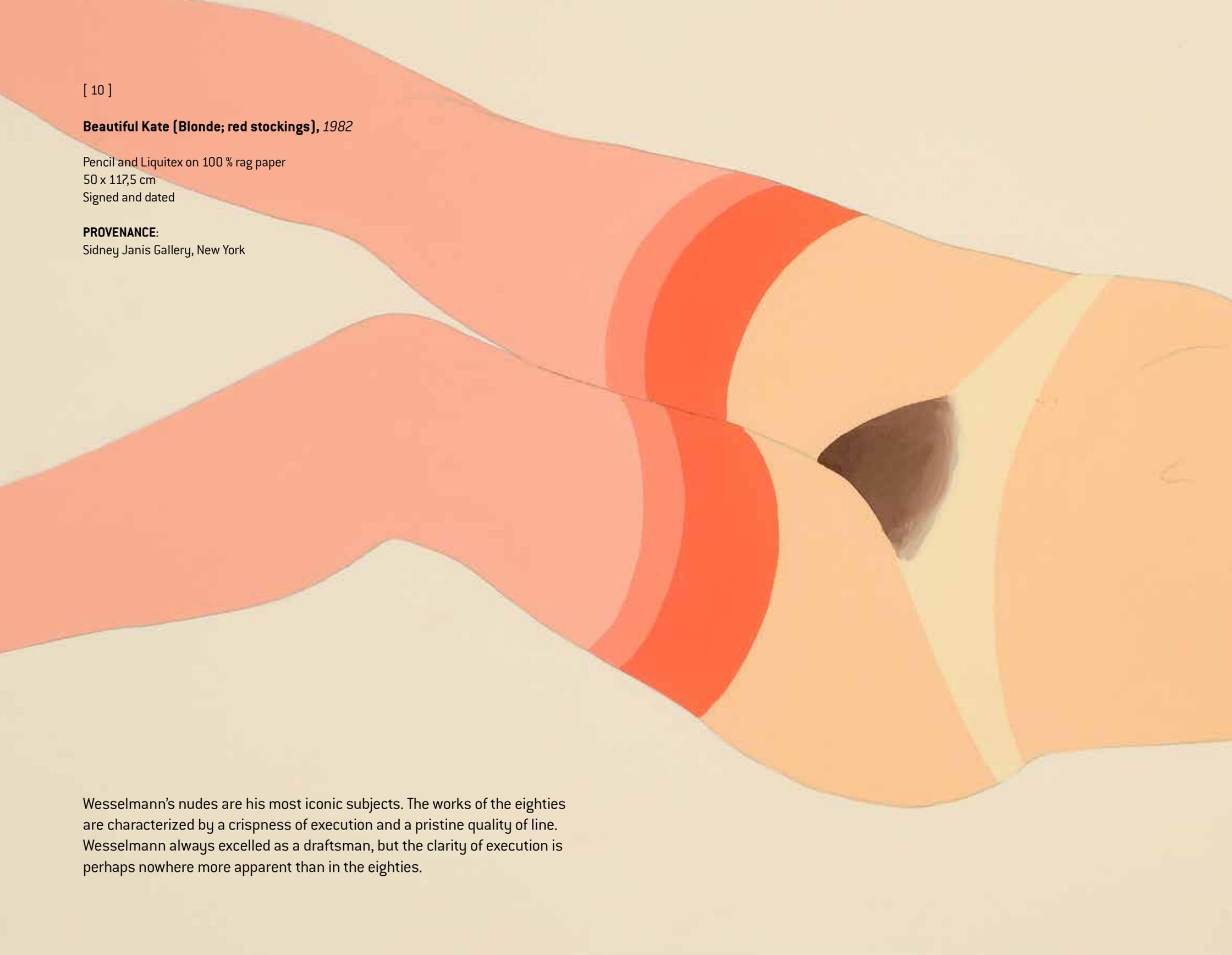
50 x 117,5 cm

Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

Wesselmann's nudes are his most iconic subjects. The works of the eighties are characterized by a crispness of execution and a pristine quality of line. Wesselmann always excelled as a draftsman, but the clarity of execution is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the eighties.





[11]

Study for Bedroom Painting # 73, 1982

Conte crayon and thinned liquitex on 100 % rag paper

66 x 103 cm

Signed and dated



[12]

Study for steel scribble painting, 1983

Liquitex on bristol board

44,5 x 54 cm

Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 1989

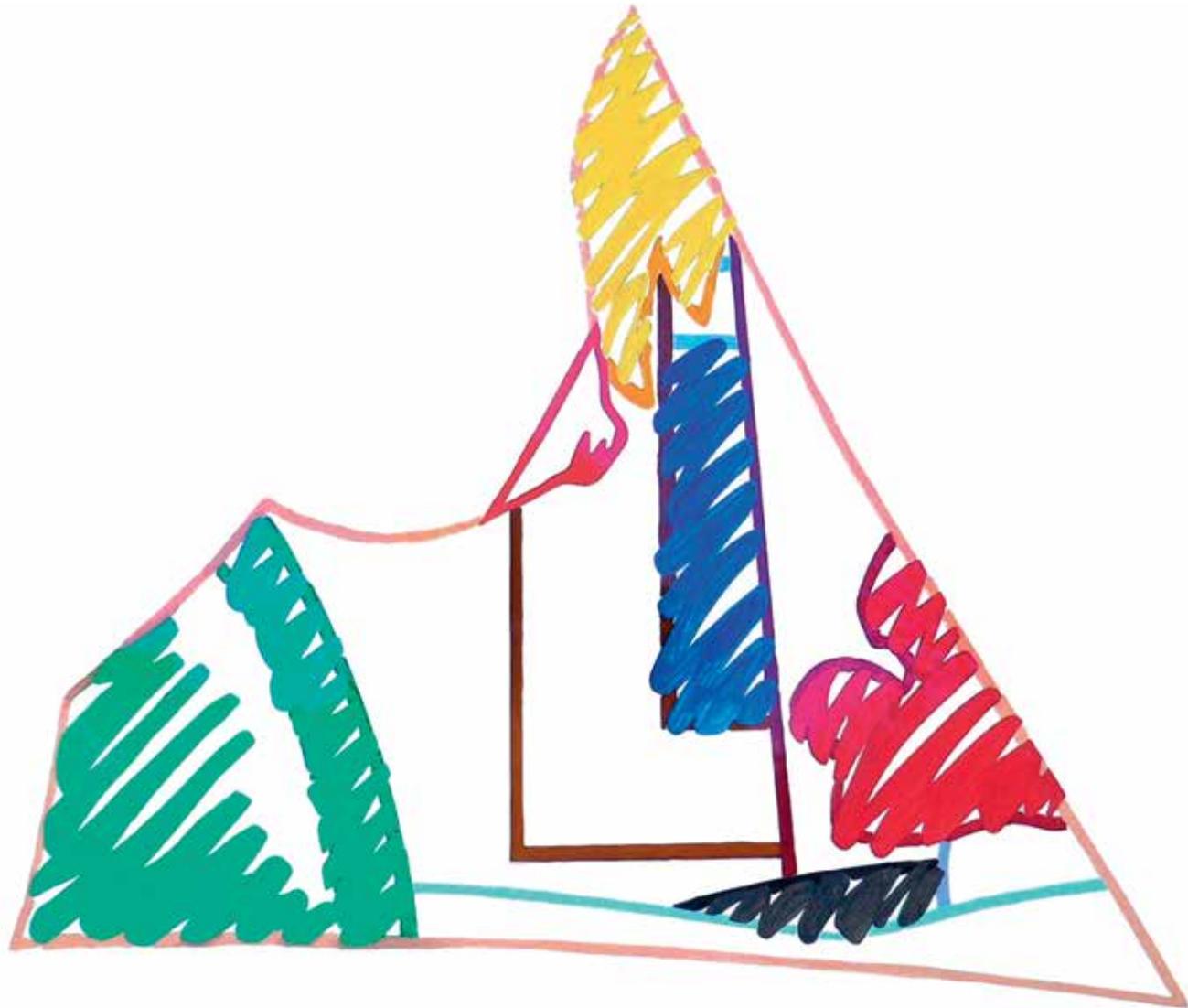
Gallery Hafenrichter, Nürnberg, 2007

Private collection, Belgium

In the 1980s, Wesselmann became increasingly inventive and he began a signature body of work that focused for the first time on negative space. His works became more complex in form, forcing the viewer's eye to visually define objects where Wesselmann had scooped out spatial references. With the Drop-Out series, Wesselmann allowed less to be more. By leaving large body parts unpainted or simply void of surface, Wesselmann created a truly unique approach to picture making while staying true to his aesthetic.



*Self-Portrait while drawing,
Oil on shaped canvas, 1983.*



[13]

Study for Bedroom Nude with Black Choker, 1985

Liquitex on Bristol board

29,2 x 31,7 cm

Signed and dated

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

Wesselmann was willing to execute many studies before deciding on a final version. Although repetition was a normal process in Pop Art, each drawing by Tom Wesselmann effected spontaneity and possessed an individual personality. From his bedroom doodles he made several thematic variations, working from the same pose of the nude, with minor changes.



[14]

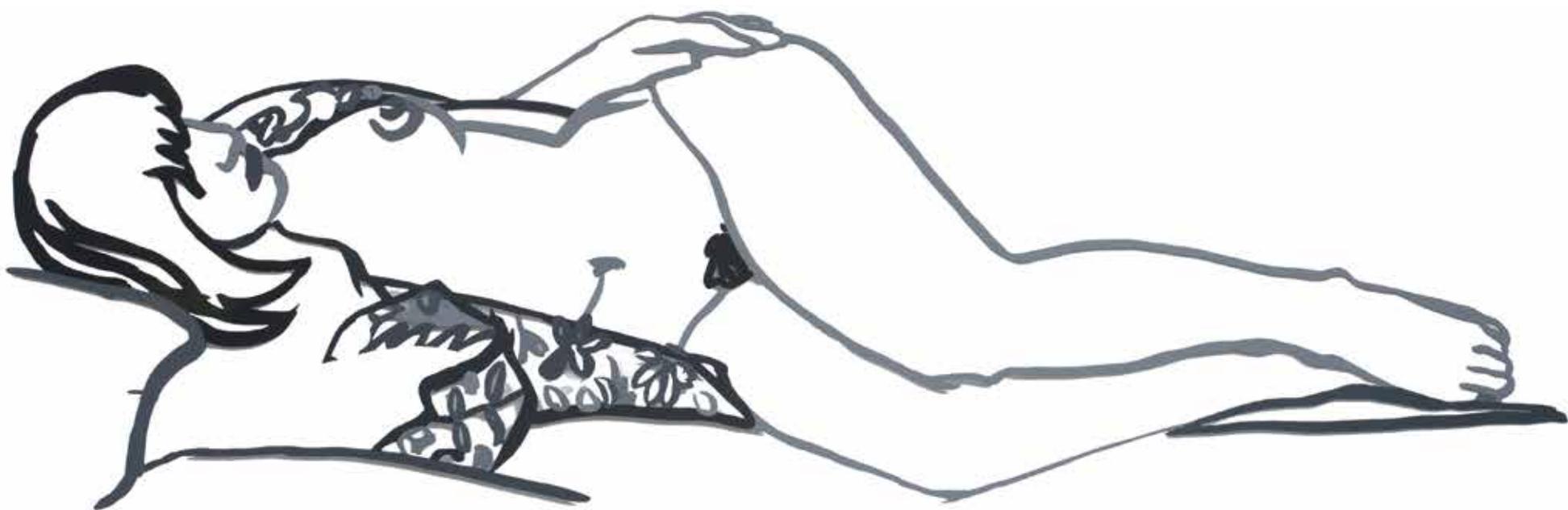
Monica asleep in Robe (gray), 1985 – 1990

Enamel on laser-cut steel

40,5 x 132 cm

Signed, dated and title on verso

In 1983 Wesselmann made his first drawings in steel and began the most productive phase of his career. The lines on paper were lifted, like they were drawn directly on the wall. They started out as works in black and white, enabling him to redevelop the theme of the nude and its composition.



[15]

Monica Sitting Twisted (gray), 1989

Enamel on laser-cut steel

71,5 x 110 cm

Signed, dated and title on verso

These works are not meant to be spontaneous, but rather are carefully worked out drawings, with the paper removed. In all these cut-out works, the thickness of the metal is held to a minimum not to be of great importance. Wesselmann describes these years as the happiest and most rewarding of his life.



[16]

Monica Nude in Robe and Stockings (Var #8), 1986

Enamel on laser-cut steel
83,5 x 168 cm
Signed, dated and title on verso

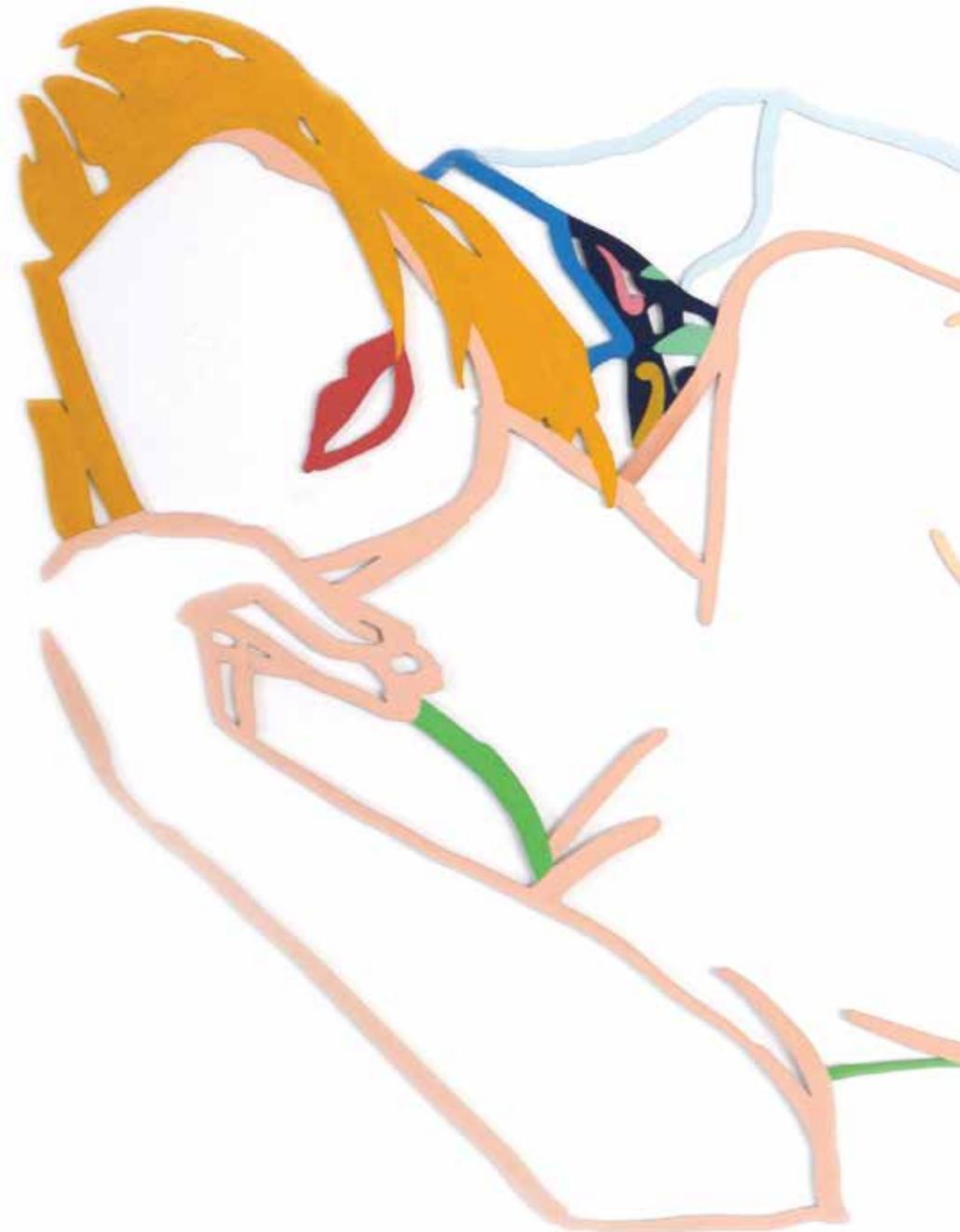
PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

Tom Wesselmann did 12 of these, each was uniquely painted in different colors (one of these twelve in black), so no two are alike.



Wesselmann was a brilliant colorist and draftsman and in his colored laser-cut steel drawings he fused together the two great traditions of color and line. All of Wesselmann's important elements found in his early works are united in these metal works. They started out as works in black and Wesselmann took his idea further and decided to make them in color as well.





[17]

Monica reclining (black), 1986 – 1989

Enamel on laser-cut steel

63,5 x 122 cm

Signed, dated and title on verso

Wesselmann deliberately left the face blank in most of his works, to avoid the suggestion of a portrait, but Monica's posture commands admiration and desire. Without the personalization of his portrait, Wesselmann leaves the erotic potential open to subjective interpretation and, most significantly, to the imagination.



[18]

Monica lying on Robe and Pillow (Variation #6), 1987

Enamel on laser-cut steel

114,5 x 175 cm

Signed, dated and title on verso

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, WY, USA.

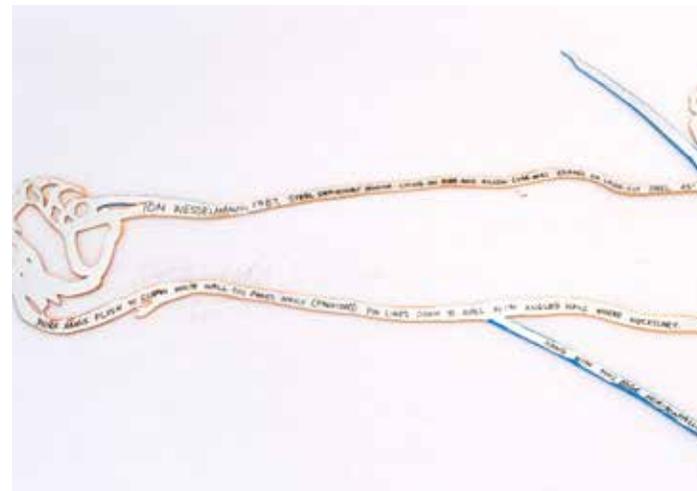
Tom Wesselmann did 8 versions of this:

4 were uniquely painted in different colors, and 4 were painted black.

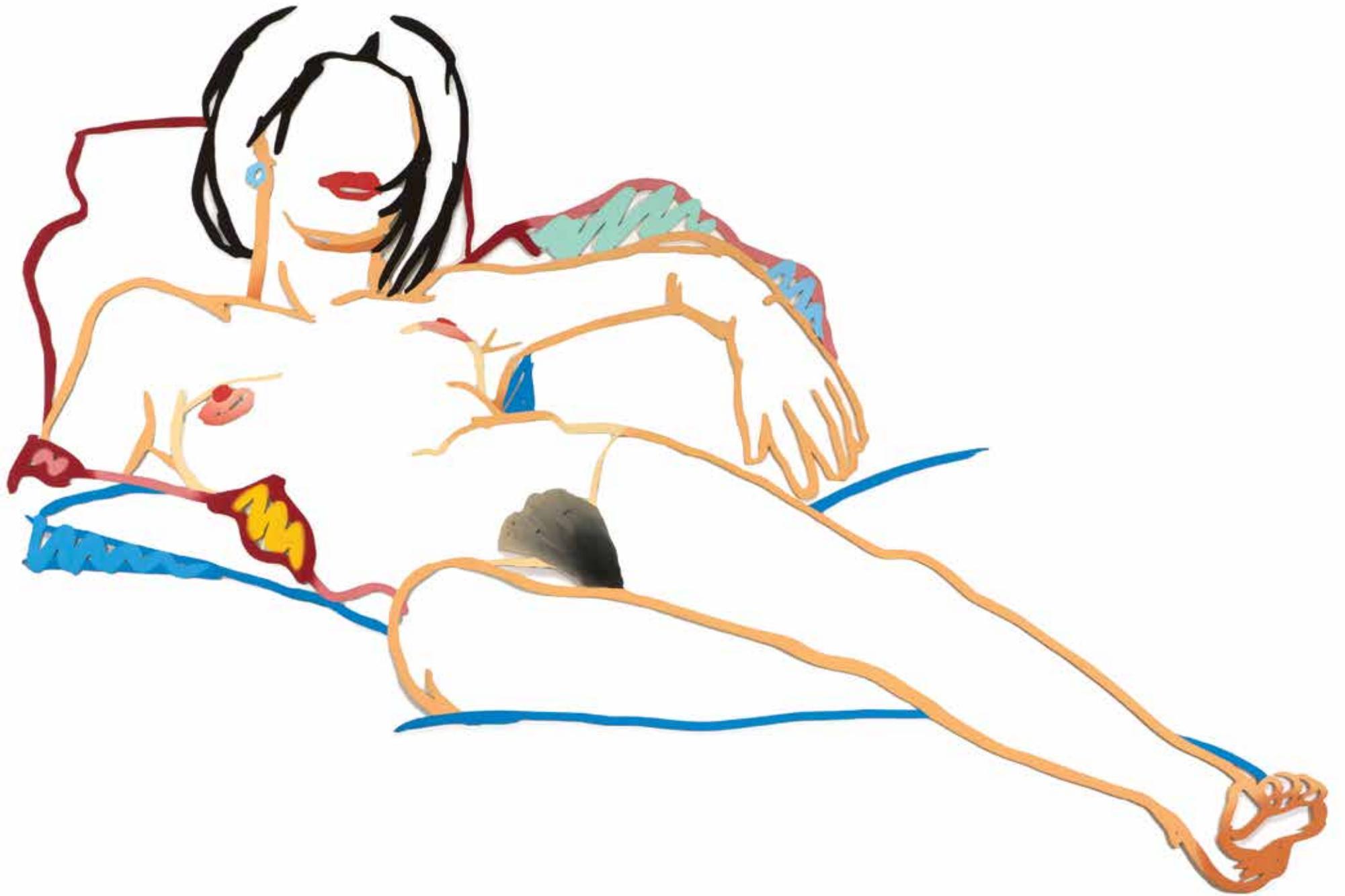
At this relatively late stage in his career he is doing fresher, newer and more exciting work than many of the younger artists of the eighties.

“When I got this new metal stuff going, I had never run into anything so heady before... It was the most exciting time of my entire life, these past few years, beginning these steel and aluminum pieces, and then seeing them through to fruition.”

Tom Wesselmann



Details of the verso of this work.



[19]

Rosemary with socks leaning on one elbow (black), 1989

Enamel on laser-cut steel

104 x 91,5 cm

Signed, dated and title on verso



*Original crate for Rosemary with
Socks leaning on one elbow.*

Wesselmann constantly renewed himself. In the eighties he was a pioneer with his new approaches to familiar subjects as nudes and landscapes, that he redefined in complex webs of metal lines. They seem to have just been scribbled, and then picked up and tossed onto a gallery wall.



[20]

Study for Monica Edition, 1989

Liquitex and collage on paper

37 x 56 cm

Signed and dated in pencil

Tom Wesselmann met Monica Serra, the model for this and innumerable other later works, in the early 1980s.



[21]

Fast sketch nude with stockings

Liquitex and pencil on paper

94 x 145 cm

Signed and dated



Wesselmann made a similar screenprint of this pose with black hair and red stockings in an edition of 100.



[22]

Fat line nude study, 1992

Liquitex and pencil on Bristol Board

33 x 50 cm

Signed and dated

Early in his career Tom Wesselmann realized that some of the artists he most admired, including Matisse, drew grossly distorted figures and yet persuade the viewer of their expressive truth. The solution Wesselmann hit upon was to find a strong, readily identifiable and straightforward visual language of his own. In the works of the 90's the brush strokes are broader and his flat colors, clean lines, and bold yet seemingly anonymous presentation of the female figure characterizes Wesselmann's art for over four decades.



Nude Lying Back, oil on cut-out aluminium, 1993



[23]

Smoking Cigarette, 1998

Liquitex and cut out paper
16,5 x 15,5 cm
Signed and dated



Big Maquette for Smoker Sculpture, 1978 – 1989.



Whitman 78

[24]

Smoking Cigarette, 1998

Liquitex and cut out paper
12,7 x 10,2 cm
Signed and dated





Wasserman 98

[25]

Smoking Cigarette, 1998

Liquitex and cut out paper
12,4 x 13 cm
Signed and dated



*Smoking Cigarette #2, oil on masonite
and wood formica base, 1980*



Wasserman 98

[26]

Smoking Cigarette, 1998

Liquitex and cut out paper

13,2 x 12,7 cm

Signed and dated



W. H. H. 98

SCREENPRINTS

[27]

Nude, 1965

Screenprint in colors

607 x 755 mm

Edition: 200 + 50 AP (numbered I – L),

an additional 20 were printed for use by Phillip Morris.

Signed and numbered in pencil.

From the portfolio *11 Pop Artists Volume II*, published by Original Editions, New York.

The *11 Pop Artists portfolios* were commissioned by Phillip Morris for use in Pop and Op, an exhibition of approximately 65 graphic works, which toured the United States from 1965 to 1967.

For the generation of artists who defined the 1960s, the making of multiples was a logical, even necessary, element of art practice. It was the Pop artists who most aggressively pushed the ateliers to explore bigger, more complex, and ever more experimental methods. These artists also cared less about traditional boundaries. In fact, by the early 1960s, commercial printmaking techniques were transferred back into these artists' unique works: Rauschenberg and Warhol used silkscreen in their paintings and Lichtenstein and Johns regularly used stencils to mitigate the handmade quality of paintings, what makes printmaking as a process perfectly appropriate to the Pop aesthetic.



11 Pop Artists Volume II is housed in a purple cloth-covered portfolio with deep yellow paper lining and title screenprinted in white on the front.



[28]

Seascape (foot), 1968

Screenprint in colors

610 x 600 mm

Edition : 150

Signed, dated and numbered in pencil

From the portfolio *Edition 68*, published for Documenta 4, Kassel.

His compositional focus became more daring by the end of the sixties, as in his *Seascape series*, narrowing down to isolate a single detail as in *Foot*. In the end of the sixties he began focusing on a few details of the body, such as hands, feet and breasts, investing them with a symbolic life of their own. It is important to remember that in the 1960s, nudity in the American media was still rare and considered demure. With their lusciously painted nails held aloft, Wesselmann's eroticising of the feet in the present work can be seen as a tongue in cheek commentary upon the controversy still surrounding sex and nudity and an underlying resistance to change in spite of the much publicised cultural liberation.



[29]

From Bedroom Painting # 41, 1990

Screenprint in colors

1511 x 1715 mm

Edition 100, 12 AP, 12 HC, 3 PP and 3 DP prints numbered I/III-III/III

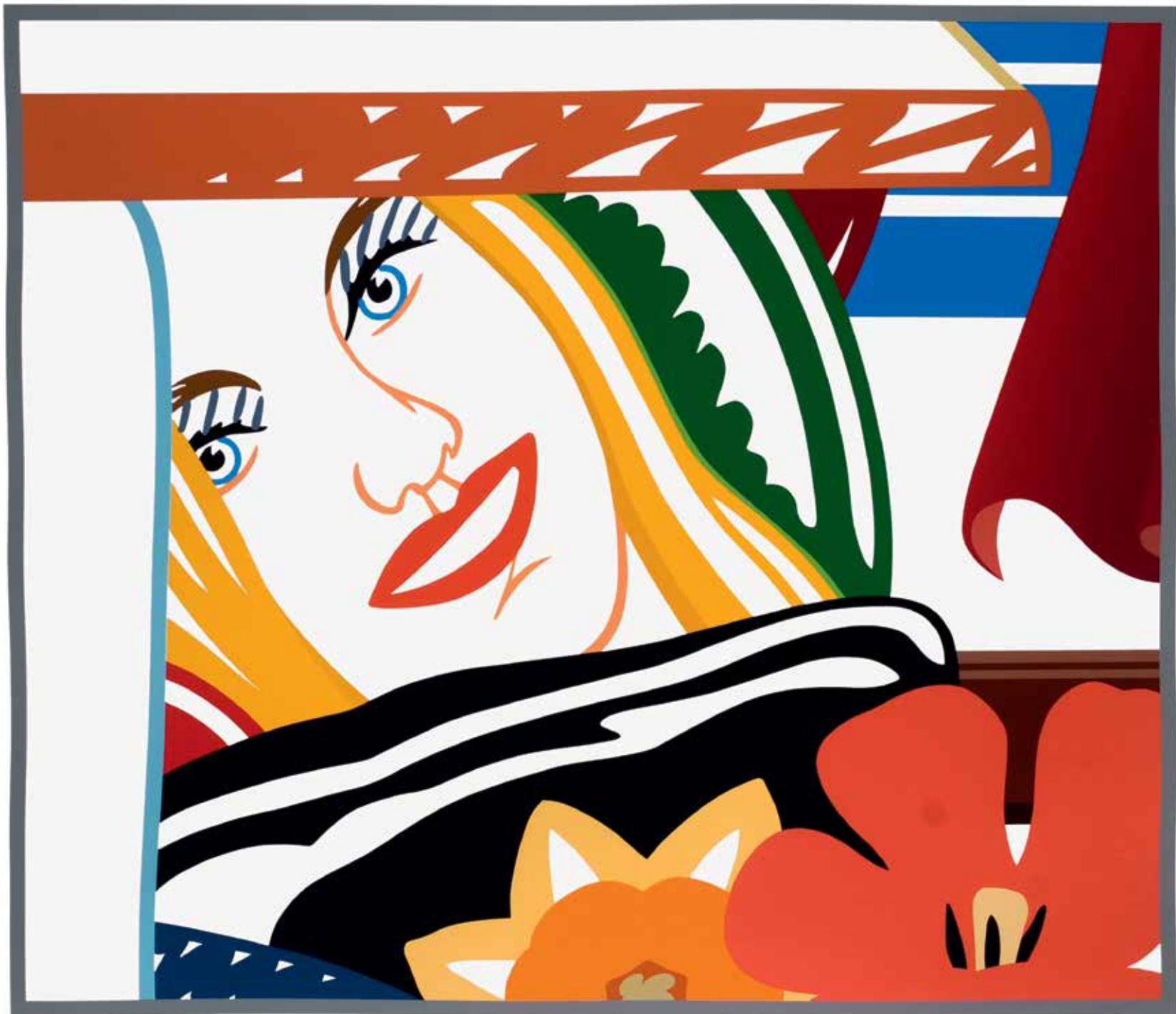
Signed and numbered in pencil

Published by International Images Inc., Vermont.

Tom Wesselmann discovered an interest in faces in large formats, close-ups, which he placed in bedroom settings: the Bedroom paintings.



Bedroom painting #41, oil on canvas, 1978.



Still Life with Liz, 1993

Screenprint in colors

1511 x 1448 mm

Edition 90, 12 AP, 12 HC, 3 PP, 3 DP

Signed and numbered in pencil

Published by International Images Inc., Vermont.

In the silkscreen *Still Life with Liz* from 1993, Wesselmann puts Liz Taylor's iconic image, as Andy Warhol silkscreened it in the sixties, beautifully in the background of a patterned still life composition. Elizabeth Taylor was during her lifetime the star of pop culture. Now, she will become a true icon, also thanks to Andy Warhol who painted 13 portraits of her in 1963 with different colors. Wesselmann made a series of prints that feature famous works of art by Masters of the 20th Century including Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Fernand Leger, Mondrian, Cézanne and others.



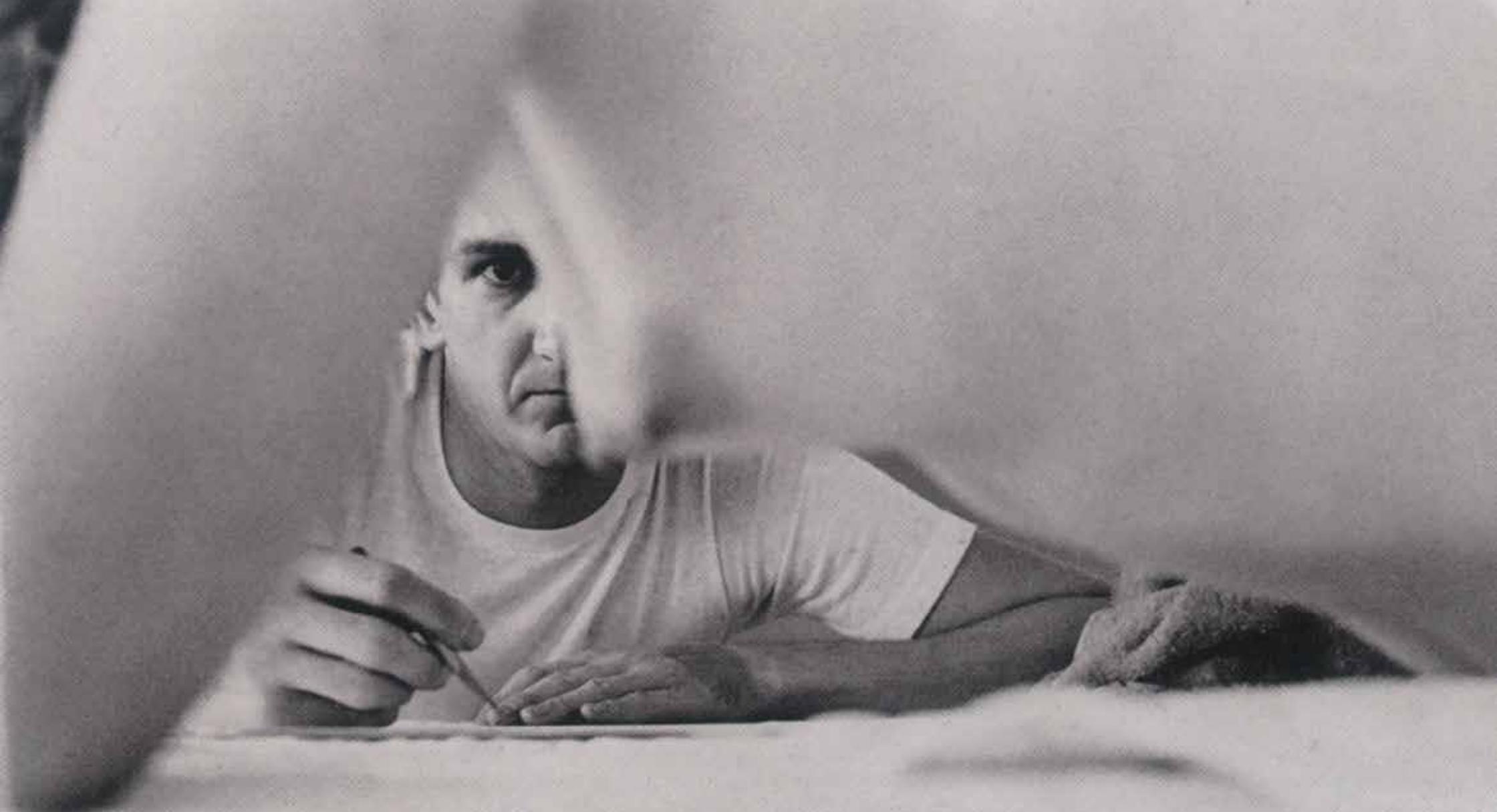
Andy Warhol, Liz, Offset-lithograph on paper, 1964.

© Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York.



BIOGRAPHY

Tom Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on 23 February 1931. Between 1949 and 1951 he studied at the Hiram College in Ohio before studying psychology at the University of Cincinnati. One year later he was called up for military service due to the Korea war. Being discontented with his situation he began to draw cartoons at that time. In 1954 he resumed his studies and apart from this he attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He moved to New York to attend Cooper Union School for Arts and Architecture in 1956. He earned his living by teaching at a high school in Brooklyn as well as by drawing cartoons for several journals and magazines. At the end of the fifties a series of collages in small format were created and are regarded as precursors of the later series 'Great American Nudes' and 'Still life' in big format. Out of these collages he developed first nude depictions in 1960. His first solo exhibition took place at the Tanager Gallery in New York in 1961. One year later he participated in the group exhibition 'New Realists' at the Sidney Janis Gallery and his international career with numerous exhibitions started off. The same year his first assemblages with the title 'Still Life' came into existence. In 1963 Wesselmann married his girlfriend and fellow student Claire Selley, who also was his most important model. He began a series of 'Bathtub Collages'. In 1966 the first of many one-man shows took place at the Janis Gallery. In 1964 Tom Wesselmann began with further series, e.g. 'Bedroom Paintings', 'Seascapes' and 'Smokers', which he continued until the early 1980s. In 1980 he published a treatise about his artistic development under the pseudonym Slim Stealingworth. In 1983 his first 'Metal Works' were produced, which were based on the artist's drawings and sketches. In 1994 a comprehensive retrospective took place at the Kunsthalle in Tübingen. Wesselmann died in New York on 17 December 2004. His choice of trivial motifs, their monumental scale, reduction to stereotypes, sexual emblems, as well as the use of bright colours, made Wesselmann a co-founder of the American Pop-Art during the 1960s.



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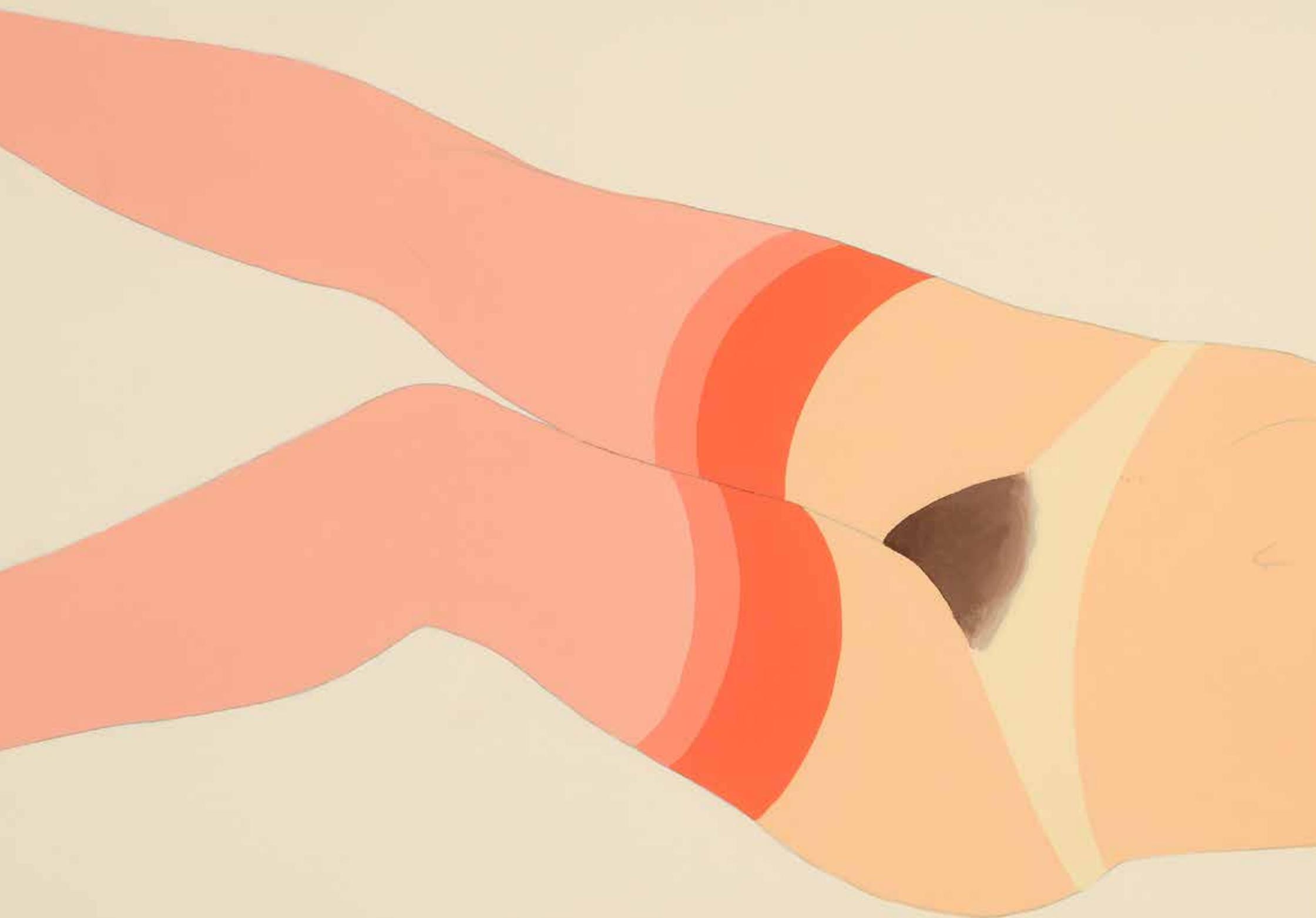
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New York [30]

Cover: Beautiful Kate [Blonde; red stockings], 1982

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Brian Kenny



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