

William Utermohlen (1933-2007)

Retrospective

20 April- 26 May 2012

Private View Thursday 19 April 2012

GV Art Gallery, 49 Chiltern Street, Marylebone, London W1U 6LY



Imaginary Portrait of Francis Bacon, 1967, altered 1997, watercolour & oil on paper

In 1995, William Utermohlen was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. His last self-portraits are unique artistic and medical documents that have been exhibited to great international acclaim. They portray a man doomed, yet fighting to preserve his identity in the face of an implacable illness.

This retrospective exhibition at GV Art brings together, for the first time in London, early works from 1965 to the artist's last poignant pencil drawings of 2000.

William Utermohlen was born in 1933 in Philadelphia, the only son of first generation German immigrant parents. He won a scholarship to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1951. After military service in 1953, William travelled through France, Spain and Italy where he discovered and developed a lifelong love for the work of Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Andrea Mantegna and Nicolas Poussin. In 1956, he enrolled in the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford. In 1962, William returned to England, where he met the future art historian Patricia Redmond; they settled in London and were married in 1965.

In 1964, William began his first major cycle of paintings, based on Dante's 33 cantos of the Inferno. In their medieval literary references, these jarred with the optimistic and superficial mood of the mid-60s. By the end of the cycle, William had emerged as a mature and committed figurative painter.

His next great cycle, *The Mummies Parade* (1969-70), combined childhood memories of the Philadelphia New Year's Day Parade with media and television imagery alluding to the violent conflicts of late 1960s America.

In 1990-91, William painted the last great cycle of his career, the Conversation Pieces. In 1995, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and, in *Blue Skies*, his last large painting, William expresses his reaction to this knowledge: a devastated figure holding on to a table as on to raft in the blue bleakness of an empty studio. William's case and his drawings were the subject of a now-famous article in the British medical monthly *The Lancet* published in June 2001.

William Utermohlen made his last drawings in pencil in 2000-02; he died on March 21 2007. His works have been the subject of numerous exhibitions in the USA, Britain, France and Italy since 2001, including Wellcome Trust, London; Fogg Museum, Harvard University; New York Academy of Medicine; Philadelphia Academy of Medicine, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles; Cité des Sciences in Paris, The Chicago Cultural Center and the Permanente in Milan.

Curator Chris Boïcos will be at GV Art on Tuesday 24th April to talk about the artist and exhibition from 7 pm. Places free but RSVP essential.

Patricia Utermohlen will be talking about her late husband at GV Art on the 10th and 17th May from 7 pm. Places are free but RSVP is essential.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Exhibition curator **Chris Boïcos** was born in Athens in 1958. He studied Art History at the University of Syracuse, New York and met the Utermohls at its London department in 1979. He subsequently studied at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. He is Professor of the History of Art for the Paris departments of the University of California, University of Southern California, University of Wisconsin and University of Delaware. He is a founder and, since 1999, director of the Galerie Beckel Odille Boïcos in the Marais district of Paris. He has curated all exhibitions of the work of William Utermohlen in the US and in Paris.

Patricia Utermohlen, received a masters degree in history of art from the University of Massachusetts in 1975. At the time William was visiting artist at this college. Upon returning to England in the same year Patricia was appointed art historian for contemporary art at Syracuse University, London Centre (which she left two years ago). At the same time she started a course for Modern Art Studies at the ICA where she discussed contemporary exhibitions currently displayed in London galleries. After William's illness she continues the same course in his former studio which she calls *Art in Its Time in Little Venice*.

GV Art is a contemporary art gallery which aims to explore and acknowledge the inter-relationship between art and science, and how the areas cross over and inform one another. The gallery produces exhibitions and events that create a dialogue focused on how modern man interprets and understands the advances in both areas and how an overlap in the technological and the creative, the medical and the historical are paving the way for new aesthetic sensibilities to develop.

For Press contacts please email GV Art via media@gvart.co.uk or call 020 8408 9800

Please see image sheet attached.

VISITOR INFORMATION

GV Art, 49 Chiltern Street
London W1U 6LY nearest tube Baker Street
Tel: 020 8408 9800
Email: info@gvart.co.uk
Web : www.gvart.co.uk

GALLERY OPENING HOURS

Tuesday to Friday 11am – 6pm,
Saturdays 11am – 4pm or by appointment.
Admission Free



www.gvart.co.uk

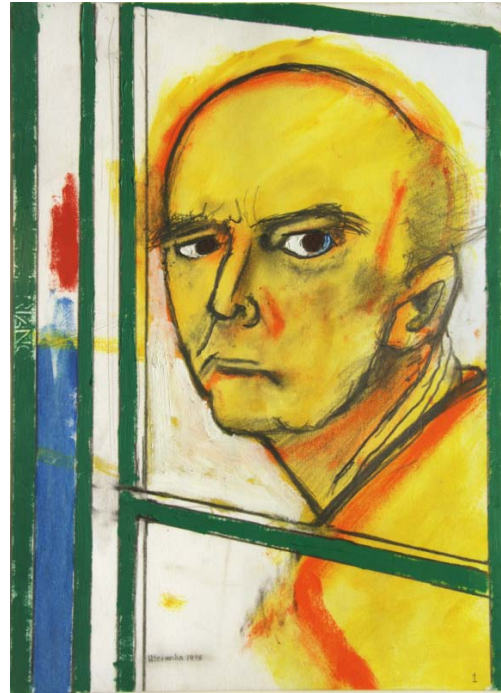
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IMAGES



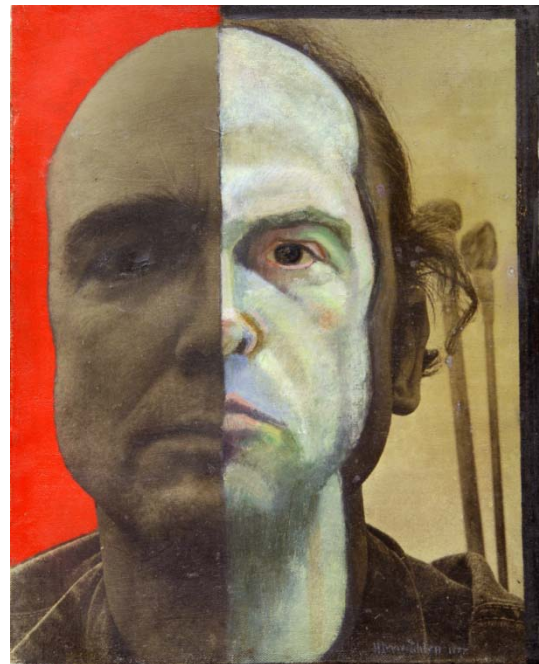
Dante Cycle - The Dust Again Canto XXIV, 1966, oil on canvas - 152.5 x 120 cm



Self Portrait (with Easel - yellow and Green), 1996, 46 x 35 cm



Blue Skies, 1995, oil on canvas 152 x 122 cm



Self Portrait (split), 1977, oil, charcoal, photograph on gesso on canvas, 25.5 x 20 cm