

2023 Exhibition Schedule

A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran

June 2 – September 3, 2023

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In June 2023, The Drawing Center will present *A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran*, the first comprehensive exhibition of Kahlil Gibran's drawings in the United States. Best known in the United States as the prolific poet and essayist who authored the 1923 publication *The Prophet*, Lebanese-American writer Kahlil Gibran viewed himself equally as an artist, producing paintings, watercolors, sketches, illustrations, book covers, and other visual material as a complement to his written work. In his writing, Gibran broke with the rigid conventions of traditional Arabic poetry and literary prose, and his non-sectarian approach, which combined elements of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Jungian psychology, was a revelation to Arabic-speaking and immigrant communities in the United States. Gibran took a similar approach in his visual art, practicing an idiosyncratic fusion of symbolist pantheism and spiritual mysticism to create a uniquely egalitarian, universalist aesthetic. *A Greater Beauty* will present an overview of Gibran's drawings and sketches alongside manuscript pages, notebooks, correspondence, magazine illustrations, and first edition publications, providing a glimpse into the artist's production in the context of his work as a whole.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a robust publication, featuring over 100 images as well as new scholarship by The Drawing Center's Chief Curator Claire Gilman; Anneka Lenssen, Associate Professor of Global Modern Art at the University of California Berkeley; Joseph Geagea, Director of the Gibran Museum; and Wail S. Hassan, Director of the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature and English at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Written contributions by three contemporary artists—Ali Cherri (b. Beirut, lives in Paris), Jordan Nassar (b. New York, lives in New York), and Mounira Al Solh (b. born Beirut, lives in Beirut and the Netherlands)—will reflect on the sustained influence of Gibran as well as on negotiating diasporic relationships more generally.

A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran is organized by Claire Gilman, Chief Curator, with Isabella Kapur, Curatorial Associate, and Anneka Lenssen, Associate Professor of Global Modern Art, University of California, Berkeley.

Artist Biography

Kahlil Gibran was born Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān in Ottoman-ruled Bsharri in 1883 to a Maronite Christian family. In 1895, Gibran's mother moved him, his half-brother, and two younger sisters to Boston, where she worked as a pack peddler, leaving Gibran's father in Lebanon. Displaying an aptitude for the arts at an early age, Kahlil Gibran was supported in his endeavors by key mentors throughout his life. As a teenager, Gibran met photographer, publisher, and philanthropist Fred Holland Day and poet Josephine Preston Peabody, both of whom provided Gibran with his entrance into Boston's creative community. Day hosted the first solo exhibition of Gibran's drawings in 1904 in his Boston photo studio shortly after Gibran returned from

Beirut, where he attended college. At that event, Gibran met Mary Haskell, who would become a lifelong friend (there is speculation that the two were also romantically involved) and benefactor to Gibran, paying for him to attend the Académie Julian art school in Paris from 1908 to 1910. While in Paris, Gibran became involved with Syrian political dissidents, whose activities he continued to support upon his return to the United States. Gibran's artwork was shown in 1914 at Montross Gallery and in 1917 at the galleries of M. Knoedler & Co, both in New York. In 1923, Gibran published his best-known written work *The Prophet*, an anthology of poems that captured the attention of the world and eventually made Gibran the best-selling American poet of the twentieth century. On April 10, 1931, at the age of forty-eight, Gibran died of liver disease in his home on West 10th Street in New York City. He was buried in Bsharri on the grounds of what is now the Gibran Museum.

Naudline Pierre: *This Is Not All There Is*

June 2 – September 3, 2023



Naudline Pierre's layered wash drawings and richly-hued paintings create fictional worlds rooted in a mythology of her own making. In her forthcoming exhibition, *This is Not All There Is*, Pierre continues her exploration of imagined worlds, incorporating drawings large and small alongside and within sculptural elements to create an immersive environment.

Aware of the possibility as well as the restriction inherent in narratives of spiritual transcendence, Pierre mobilizes time-honored motifs such as the altar piece and ecclesiastical architecture, creating fantastical scenes of winged creatures and fiery beings. Like color and texture and composition, Pierre deploys religious iconography as a tool for building liminal, multidimensional spaces within her drawings. Although Pierre's primary medium is painting, she views drawing as an integral part of her larger practice because of the way in which it solicits a back-and-forth relationship between artist and object. Pierre has described how, in contending with the paper surface and the myriad technical possibilities implicit in drawing, the artist gives up a certain degree of control. She likens paper to a living organism that both absorbs and repels, revealing, in the process, the physical work involved in an image taking root on a drawing's surface.

Naudline Pierre: This Is Not All There Is is organized by Claire Gilman, The Drawing Center's Chief Curator, with Isabella Kapur, Curatorial Associate.

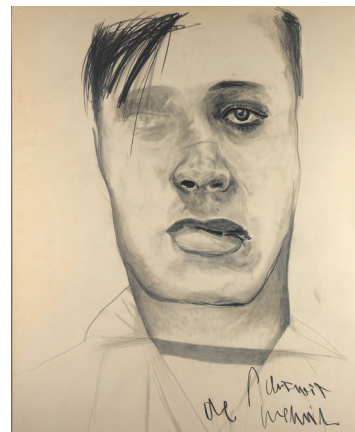
Artist Biography

Naudline Pierre (b. 1989, Leominster, MA) received an MFA from New York Academy of Art, NY, and a BFA from Andrews University, MI. In 2021, her work was featured in Prospect.5 New Orleans and was the subject of a major solo exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art. Pierre participated in the 2019–2020 Artist Residency program at the Studio Museum in New York and her work was exhibited in a three-person exhibition at MoMA PS1 as a culmination of the program. Pierre has participated in numerous group exhibitions, most recently at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; the Pérez Art Museum Miami, FL; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL. Her work belongs to the permanent collections of

the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; The Dean Collection, Macedon, NY; ICA Miami, Miami, FL; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; and the CC Foundation, Shanghai, China.

Stéphane Mandelbaum

November 9, 2023 – February 18, 2024



Stéphane Mandelbaum produced hundreds of portraits within a short creative period of just ten years. The first solo exhibition of the artist's drawings in the United States, *Stéphane Mandelbaum* will feature more than sixty works on paper and will occupy the entirety of The Drawing Center's exhibition space. A consummate draftsman, Mandelbaum was devoted to probing the depths of his own persona by conjuring some of the darkest visions of the twentieth-century in Europe. He obsessively documented unnamed figures who populated Brussels's subcultures, alongside famous figures like Arthur Rimbaud, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Francis Bacon, and Pierre Goldman, as well as National Socialist criminals such as Joseph Goebbels and Ernst Röhm. Mandelbaum sought to capture the essence of their characters with a ballpoint pen, oil paint, graphite or colored pencil, occasionally adding collaged newspaper clippings, scribbles and texts in French, Yiddish—a language that the artist was teaching himself—Italian, and German. His Jewish descent, Belgium's colonial history, and also the nightlife and underworld of Brussels, permeated his work and ultimately shaped a life driven by the questions: Where do I come from and what can I be?

Stéphane Mandelbaum is organized by Laura Hoptman, The Drawing Center's Executive Director, in collaboration with Susanne Pfeffer, Director of the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt where the exhibition debuted in 2022. Following its presentation at The Drawing Center, the exhibition will travel to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid.

Artist Biography

Born in Brussels in 1961, Stéphane Mandelbaum (1961–1986) was the son of Jewish Armenian immigrants and artists—the painter Arié Mandelbaum and illustrator Pili Mandelbaum. Nurtured from an early age in drawing, Mandelbaum's parents enrolled him in an alternative boarding school as a young boy to accommodate his severe dyslexia. Learning to write was difficult, and he soon turned to drawing as a more accessible means of expression, though his drawings frequently incorporate writing riddled with spelling errors, both intentional and unintentional. At sixteen, Mandelbaum began studying at the Academy of Drawing and Decorative Arts of Watermael-Boitsfort, where his drawing increasingly portrayed sexualized and pornographic figures. In 1979, he transferred to the School of Plastic and Visual Arts in Uccle, Belgium, where his father served as Director until 2004. Fascinated with the brilliant and tragic histories of artistic forebearers like Francis Bacon and Egon Schiele, Mandelbaum drew and painted numerous portraits of prominent cultural figures lined with derisive scribbles, names, slogans, and Yiddish graffiti. Deeply influenced by the fate of his paternal grandfather Szulim, a Polish Jew who escaped the Holocaust, Mandelbaum was fascinated by the faces of some of the most notorious Nazis, drawing Josef Goebbels and Ernst Rohm from newsreel photographs and transforming them into more conventionally posed portraits. In 1985, he had his first exhibitions—one at the Galerie Hugo Godderis in Veurne, in northwest Belgium, and another

at the Galerie Christine Colmant in Brussels. Around this time, he became infatuated with the aesthetics and lifestyle of Brussels's underworld, painting images of those seen by society as perverse or immoral. Married to a woman but frequently depicting sexual encounters with men, Mandelbaum's artworks abound with themes that allude to a contradictory and uncertain identity—one that was constantly in flux and defined by a series of transgressions and untruths. His life was cut short when he was murdered at the age of twenty-five, the result of his obscure involvement with a trafficked artwork. Though he never achieved financial or critical acclaim during his lifetime, Mandelbaum's body of work was recognized in 2019 in a retrospective organized by the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Credits

Lead support for *A Greater Beauty: The Drawings of Kahlil Gibran* is provided by Dominique Lévy. Generous funding is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Karim F. Tabet and Family, Tony Tamer, the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, Zaza and Philippe Jabre, and Tony and Elham Salamé. Additional support is provided by Carla Chammas and Judi Roaman, Isabel Stainow Wilcox, Joumana Rizk, Sara and Hussein Khalifa, Frances Beatty Adler and Allen Adler, Dita Amory, Jane Dresner Sadaka and Ned Sadaka, the Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte, Harry Tappan Heher and Jean-Edouard van Praet d'Amerloo, and Waqas Wajahat.

Naudline Pierre: This Is Not All There Is is made possible by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, James Cohan, and Michi Jigarjian. Additional support is provided by Olivier and Desiree Berggruen, David and Jocelyne DeNunzio, Isabel Stainow Wilcox, Bill and Christy Gautreaux, Bernard I. Lumpkin and Carmine D. Boccuzzi, Hedy Fischer and Randy Shull, and Marieluise Hessel.

Images

Kahlil Gibran, *The Heavenly Mother*, 1920. Pencil on wove paper, 22 1/4 × 14 1/2 in (56.5 × 36.8 cm). Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. Photography by Daniel L. Grantham, Jr., Graphic Communication

Kahlil Gibran, *Untitled*, 1921. Watercolor and pencil on paper, 5 × 6 in (12.7 × 15.2 cm). Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. Photography by Daniel L. Grantham, Jr., Graphic Communication

Kahlil Gibran, *The Summit*, c. 1925. Watercolor and pencil on paper, 11 × 8 1/2 in (27.9 × 21.6 cm). Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis. Photography by Erwin Gaspin

Naudline Pierre, *In the Infinite*, 2023. Acrylic ink, charcoal, and oil pastel on paper, 48 × 24 in (121.9 × 61 cm). Courtesy of the artist © Naudline Pierre, courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York. Photograph by Paul Takeuchi

Naudline Pierre, *Halted Understanding*, 2023. Acrylic ink, charcoal, and oil pastel on paper, 40 × 30 in (101.6 × 76.2 cm). Courtesy of the artist © Naudline Pierre, courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York. Photograph by Paul Takeuchi

Naudline Pierre, *Welcome the Unknown*, 2023. Acrylic ink, charcoal, and oil pastel on paper, 40 × 30 in (101.6 × 76.2 cm). Courtesy of the artist © Naudline Pierre, courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York. Photograph by Paul Takeuchi

Stéphane Mandelbaum, *Composition (Mishima, Bacon...)*, 1980. Ballpoint pen on paper, 6.57 × 9.25 in (16.7 × 23.5 cm). Private Collection, Luxembourg. Photograph courtesy of Michel Zavagno, Blitz Agency, Luxembourg

Stéphane Mandelbaum, *Portrait of Meknil*, 1985. Graphite on paper, 67 × 51 1/8 in (170 × 130 cm). Private Collection