

H. C. Westermann
Le Bandeur

September 9 – October 23

To inaugurate George Adams Gallery's new Tribeca space, we are pleased to present drawings, prints and illustrated letters by H. C. Westermann. The title of the exhibition, "H.C Westermann: *Le Bandeur*," references the inscription Westermann burned onto the plywood case he fabricated for *See America First*, a suite of 18 lithographs printed at the Tamarind Workshop, Los Angeles in 1968. "Le Bandeur," according to Westermann's correspondence, was used between the printers as a kind of salutation; in translation it means "the shaft" though colloquially can take on a number of more salacious interpretations. Rarely exhibited, the complete set will be on view, serving as the thematic underpinning of this exhibition, exploring Westermann's depiction of America.

In 1965, Westermann, with his wife Joanna, drove from Connecticut to San Francisco and it was in part impressions from this trip that formed the basis for his Tamarind suite. The phrase "See America First" was originally coined to promote tourism at the newly created National Park system around the turn of the century, but evolved into a campaign to encourage domestic travel by rail and car. Westermann's appropriation of the slogan derives from personal experience, both on this trip and others. As these images attest, Westermann saw the country not only for its physical, diverse glories, but both the transcendent and ugly aspects of the social and political realities he experienced, in a life that took him from California to Connecticut via Chicago as well as deployments abroad in two major conflicts. In his works on paper, Westermann's America emerges as a kind of fantasyland of barren landscapes and futuristic cities, a place of great beauty and of great dangers. When a figure does appear in these scenes, frequently as a stand-in for the artist, they are often in a state of peril, subjected to the whims of their surroundings.

Though Westermann is most well known for his sculptures, it is his drawings that provide more of insight into his sensibilities and process. In a biographical sense, his earliest artistic endeavors were in two dimensions and he was formally trained as a draftsman before going on to pursue sculpture. Drawing, however, remained an integral part of his daily practice, not only through sketches and finished works but often in the form of illustrated letters to family and friends, a selection of which are included in this exhibition. These vignettes, often revised and refined through multiple drawings and prints, as seen in *The Human Fly* and others, nevertheless remain tied to an internal narrative and personal mythology: equal parts fact and fiction. A through-line is the recurring character of Westermann himself, in the guise of alter egos such as the lothario or the daredevil-impresario. Indeed Cliff, (as he was known to his friends), the man, was many things including devoted husband and lover, accomplished acrobat, haunted veteran and consummate craftsman. Growing up in Los Angeles in the 1920s, it would hardly be a surprise for him to have internalized the tropes and techniques of Hollywood, whether through the varied expanses of the country itself or imagined realms of popular sci-fi stories and films. These drawings and prints therefore are images of both the Westermann the artist wished to project to the world – and of the country he embraced as his own.

Horace Clifford Westermann was born in Los Angeles in 1922. After service in the Marines during WWII and in Korea, Westermann completed his studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1954. He was given his first exhibition solo exhibition in 1958 at Allan Frumkin Gallery, the gallery that went on to represent him for more than twenty years both in Chicago and New York. Westermann has been the subject of five museum retrospective exhibitions, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1968, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1978, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago in 2001, the Fondazione Prada, Milan in 2017 and most recently at the Reina Sofia, Madrid in 2019. Westermann lived and worked in Brookfield Center, Connecticut from 1961 until his death in 1981 at Danbury Hospital, following a heart attack at age 58.

H. C. Westermann

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H.C. Westermann

Baja - The Sea of Cortez, 1974

Ink and watercolor on paper
11 x 15 inches

HCWd 36



H.C. Westermann

Untitled (Hammerhead Shark), 1974

Ink and watercolor on paper
11 x 15 inches

HCWd 38



H.C. Westermann

The Watchdog, 1970

Ink and watercolor on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 26



H.C. Westermann

The Time of the Hunter, 1973

Ink and watercolor on paper
14 x 16 1/2 inches

HCWd 50

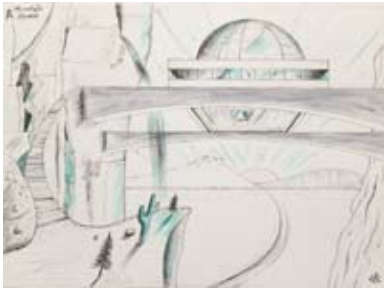


H.C. Westermann

Untitled (Mountain Home), 1970

Ink and watercolor on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 24



H.C. Westermann

A Mountain Home, 1970

Ink and watercolor on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 28



H.C. Westermann

The Burning Hills #1, 1970

Ink on paper
22 1/4 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 23



H.C. Westermann

Kiss Me Goodbye George #4, 1969

Ink and watercolor on paper
22 1/2 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 32



H.C. Westermann

Study for "1:52, 60-∞, 2000 AD", Dated 2000

Ink and wash on paper
12 x 9 inches

HCWd 39



H.C. Westermann

White City Health Spa, 1970

Ink and watercolor on paper
22 1/4 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 29



H.C. Westermann
Untitled (Operator X), 1968
Ink and wash on paper
13 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches

HCWd 41



H.C. Westermann
The Human Fly, 1971
ink on paper
29 3/4 x 22 1/4 inches

HCWd 21



H.C. Westermann
The Human Fly, 1971
Ink and watercolor on paper
29 3/4 x 22 3/8 inches

HCWd 30



H.C. Westermann
Untitled (Nude with Radio and Factory), 1970
Ink and watercolor on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 31



H.C. Westermann
Madame B #2, 1965
Ink and watercolor on paper
13 3/4 x 16 3/4 inches

HCWd 35



H.C. Westermann
Untitled, 1970
Ink on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 27



H.C. Westermann
Shark Fin Soup, 1971
Ink and watercolor on paper
13 3/4 x 16 1/2 inches

HCWd 49



H.C. Westermann
Drawing of a Man Underwater, 1973
Ink and watercolor on paper
11 x 14 inches

HCWd 58



H.C. Westermann
Untitled (Palm Tree #1), 1969
Ink and watercolor on paper
22 3/8 x 29 3/4 inches

HCWd 25



H.C. Westermann
See *America First (Suite)*, 1968
Lithograph on paper, suite of 18 prints with
artist-made slipcase
22 x 30 inches (prints), Edition of 20, 3 APs

HCWr 09



H.C. Westermann
See *America First (Slipcase)*, 1968
Artist-made slipcase with suite of 18 prints
24 x 32 3/8 x 1 3/16 inches (case)

HCWr 09.12



H.C. Westermann
Beautiful Australian Pines in the Sunshine State, Florida, 1965
Ink and wash on paper
10 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches

HCWd 46



H.C. Westermann

Billy Al Bengston (The late Gary Cooper & Mrs. Cooper...), n.d., Ink and watercolor on postcard
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches

HCWd 52



H.C. Westermann

I Never Forget An Elephant, 1973
Ink and wash on postcard
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches

HCWd 43



H.C. Westermann

Letter to Robert and Peter Frumkin, June 15 1968, "The Iron Man", 1968
Ink on paper
10 1/2 x 8 1/4 inches

HCWd 45



H.C. Westermann

Caroline Huber: October 20th 1980, 1980
Ink and watercolor on letter with illustrated and collaged envelope
10 x 8 inches (letter); 4 1/8 x 9 3/8 inches (envelope)

HCWd 54



H.C. Westermann

Hi There Big Boy..., n.d.
Ink, wash and collage on paper
10 x 8 inches

HCWd 44



H.C. Westermann

Caroline Huber: December 28th 1980, 1980
Ink and watercolor on letter with illustrated and collaged envelope
9 x 12 inches (letter); 4 1/8 x 9 3/8 inches (envelope)

HCWd 53



H.C. Westermann

When the Pale Horse & His Rider Go By...,
1973

Ink and wash on paper
14 x 11 inches

HCWd 42



H.C. Westermann

A Killer iceberg & fog (Dear Ed & Ann...), 1973

Ink and watercolor on paper
14 x 11 inches

HCWd 57



H.C. Westermann

For Billy, Sincerely Cliff, 1973

Ink on paper
8 3/4 x 11 inches

HCWd 51



H.C. Westermann

1973, For Limbo Jimbo & Dagny, 1972

Ink and watercolor on paper
11 1/4 x 15 inches

HCWd 55



H.C. Westermann

Letter to Robert Frumkin, December 1 1967,
“Beautiful Turkey...”, 1967

Ink on paper
11 x 8 1/2 inches

HCWd 47



H.C. Westermann

Dear Gentleman, 1970

Ink on paper
7 1/8 x 10 1/2 inches

HCWd 48



H.C. Westermann

Conn Tom Cat, 1977

Ink and watercolor on paper

9 3/8 x 12 1/4 inches

HCWd 37



H.C. Westermann

The Human Fly, 1971

Woodcut on paper

24 3/4 x 18 inches, Edition of 21

HCWr 24



H.C. Westermann

Cliff the Ranger, 1977

Ballpoint ink on paper

9 1/4 x 12 1/4 inches

HCWd 34



H.C. Westermann

Dear Ed: It was awful good of you..., 1972

Ink and watercolor on paper

16 1/2 x 13 1/4 inches

HCWd 56