

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

Arman: Cycles

February 28 – April 6, 2013

Opening Reception February 28, 2013, 6 – 8pm

293 10th Avenue, New York



The Potency of Arman's oeuvre is precisely that it comes out of the one, out of a very French Duchampian axis of the idea, but blossoms into a quintessence of the opposite, a celebration of excess and surplus which is not only very American but also very typically late 20th century Western – Adrian Dannatt, art critic, 2013

Paul Kasmin Gallery is pleased to present ***Cycles***, a selection of artworks from **Arman's *Bicycle* series** on view at **293 10th Avenue, New York, February 28 – April 6, 2013**. Arman's inaugural exhibition at Paul Kasmin Gallery is organized in cooperation with the **Arman Marital Trust**. While the early *Bicycles* were first shown in New York in 1992, at Marisa del Rey Gallery, this will be the U.S. debut of the full span of the series. *Cycles* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, including an essay by art critic Adrian Dannatt.

Using sliced bicycles, acrylic paints, and paintbrushes, Arman created large-scale multi-media works on canvas. Most widely known for his *Accumulations*, this body of Arman's work, created throughout the 1990s, collapses the delineation between painting and sculpture – a subject and effort central to the artist's oeuvre. Arman's bicycle works, simultaneously sculpture *and* painting, "painted sculptures" and "sculptures of paintings," could only have been created by this unique artist who was amongst the very few to have personally known, collected, and fundamentally understood both Picasso and Duchamp (not to mention his contemporaries and friends Yves Klein, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and William N. Copley) and who thus was able to combine the innovations of both "Cubism" and the "Readymade" to craft his own singular universe. Arman is a fascinating artist precisely because he is a direct descendent of the theoretical French artistic pioneers of the beginning of the 20th century, whilst also a central figure in the creation of what was later termed "Pop," a specifically American aesthetic of surplus and abundance. Furthermore, Arman rose to prominence amongst —the pioneers of Surrealism, Found Art, and Futurism, and was thus able to amass their divergent methodologies into a distinctive artistic vision.

Arman worked in series throughout his richly diverse career, and his highly literate and poetic titles often give ample clues to his inspiration and intent. In this exhibition, *Jasper's Bike* (1992) and *Van Gogh's Bike* (1993), refer the viewer to the artistic forebears of the works, while the playful *Yellowciped* (1991) evokes a hybrid creature generated of pure color and speed.

Arman once famously said, "I am momentarily the archeologist of the future. Today I have a vision of an impossible tomorrow." He possessed a passionate curiosity; and was an avid collector of art and objects, which served as his inspiration and were, at times, appropriated into his own creations. In Arman's *Bicycle* series, sculpture and painting

merge as sliced and dismantled bicycles are deliberately placed and sometimes embedded in the canvases, with an overlay and intermingling of paintbrushes. Each work is finished with gestural acrylic paint brushed and dripped along their surfaces. Arman's painted *Bicycle* series both references his sculpture *Philémon et Baucis*, recently included in the exhibition, *Sculpted Matter*, at Paul Kasmin Gallery, (Summer 2012), and is an aesthetic departure from it. *Philémon et Baucis*, a bronze cast of a bicycle treated with brown and green patina, suggests decomposition and organic unity. In his paintings, Arman flattens the three-dimensionality of the bicycles by slicing and deconstructing them, reinforcing a perceptual shift as the flattened forms are swathed in varied brushstrokes. Some of the actual brushes converge on the bicycle wheels, echoing their circular rhythms, while others are oriented in the direction of paint strokes, re-enacting the process of painting itself. Each canvas depicts these forms, drenched in acrylic paint, sliced and laid on the canvas in fragments—investing with new symbolism a mundane object that has been lost to its original context, and re-appropriated.



Arman was born Armand Pierre Fernandez 1928 in Nice, France, 1928 and became a naturalized American citizen in 1973. His foundation as an artist began in 1949, when he spent time painting in the Surrealist style at the École du Louvre. By 1958, he had begun making his mark in the art world as a painter and sculptor and, at that time, he retained a printer's misspelling of his name, from then on referring to himself as Arman. In 1960, Arman and his colleagues (Yves Klein, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, and Jean Tinguely) along with Pierre Restany, founded the avant-garde movement, *Nouveau Réalisme*—unified in seeking “new

perspective approaches of reality.” The group set out to reassess the role of art in an increasingly consumerist 20th century, and to reinsert humanism in the face of overwhelming industrialization and commodification. In 1961, Arman made his U.S. debut at The Museum of Modern Art, in William C. Seitz's landmark exhibition, *The Art of Assemblage*. From 1961 onwards, he explored creation via destruction—in his *Découpés* and *Colères*, series Arman created monumental public installations worldwide, including, *Long Term Parking; 1982*, a 50-foot-high column of concrete that encases dozens of cars, installed in the Parisian suburb of Jouy-en-Josas, and *Hope for Peace; 1995*, a 100-foot-high monument in Beirut, composed of five tons of concrete, with 78 tanks, jeeps and other war vehicles.

Arman's work has been exhibited internationally at museums and institutions, and is included in public and private collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California; and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France. In 2010, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, presented a comprehensive retrospective of his work. Arman died at his home in New York in 2005. In 2002 The *Bicycle* series was the subject of a major survey exhibition in Luxembourg, *Arman: Les Cycles de Vie*.

For more information, contact Arman@paulkasmingallery.com

Image # 1: Arman, *Untitled*, 1997, acrylic paint, paintbrushes and sliced bicycle on canvas, 65 x 44 inches

Image #2: Arman in his studio