

Seen in the Mirror: Things from the Cartin Collection

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537 West 20th Street, New York



Giorgio Morandi, *Natura morta (Still Life)*, 1946. The Cartin Collection.
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David Zwirner is pleased to present *Seen in the Mirror: Things from the Cartin Collection*, on view at the gallery's 537 West 20th Street location.

Since he began collecting in the 1980s, Mickey Cartin has assembled a remarkable and singular collection of works—including paintings from the last six centuries, drawings, sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, early printed books, artists' books, and old master prints—that reflects his own expansive curiosity and his interest in the philosophical nuances he often discovers in them. Cartin's thoughtful approach to collecting is informed by his fascination with beauty, knowledge, and the miraculous, as well as what curator Luke Syson calls the "taxonomies of the subjective and the irrational."¹ A general focus on certain genres, such as portraiture and self-portraiture as well as landscape painting, establishes links between works from disparate periods, as do conceptual and philosophical throughlines, such as numerology and seriality, which make for exciting and unexpected connections.

Included among this selection of works are engravings by Dürer and Rembrandt; self-portraits by celebrated modernists and proto-modernists like Josef Albers and Vilhelm Hammershøi; still lifes by Giorgio Morandi; a group of works by Albert York, whom Calvin Tomkins called the "most highly admired unknown artist in America";² a significant drawing by Adolf Wölfli and works by other reclusive twentieth-century figures such as Joseph Cornell and Morris Hirshfield; works by self-taught artists including Forrest Bess, Joseph Yoakum, and Martín Ramírez; and art from notable contemporary artists, including a monumental self-portrait by Joe Coleman, a group of early drawings by Sol LeWitt, and a Charles LeDray ceramic installation. Several of Cartin's rare books and manuscripts will also be featured such as the singularly unique Augsburg Book of Miracles (c. 1552)—a famed illuminated manuscript that is also the subject of a 2013 Taschen publication—as well as iconic postwar artists' books and editions such as Ed

¹ Luke Syson in conversation with Mickey Cartin, August 2021.

² Calvin Tomkins, "Artist Unknown," *The New Yorker* (June 11, 1995), p. 76.

Ruscha's *Stains* (1969) and Alighiero Boetti's conceptually monumental *Dossier postale* (1969–1970).

As Syson writes in a new essay about the collection: "Mickey Cartin's collection charts the places from which our creativity emerges: the visionary and the insane, the idiosyncratic and perceptive, the illusory, from moments of chance, intensity, imitation, and insight. He wants to know artists (he feels compelled to talk to them, a lot, and perhaps even when they're dead), insiders and outsiders, in the academy or the studio, working at the kitchen table, in a field or asylum. He wants to see beneath their surfaces and to see how they see beneath surfaces, to analyze their subjectivity and their obsessiveness, perceived here as complementary opposites. Cartin's pattern making is consequently wonderfully unstable and unsettling. It breaks down hierarchies and it makes discoveries, not least of artists themselves. His chains of being are often dreamlike; his mirrors can be misty."³

The selection of works will offer a unique opportunity to view a rare and truly original collection that spans many periods, while also providing insight into Cartin's keen connoisseurial eye, his deeply personal connection to the creative drive that has compelled artists throughout time, and his deft ability to find beauty and truth in often overlooked places. As it is for many great patrons of the arts going back generations, Cartin's collection is at once a testament to the humanistic spirit and a vivid self-portrait of the collector himself.

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³ Syson, "Seen in the Mirror: Things from the Cartin Collection," essay written on the occasion of the exhibition and published on davidzwirner.com.