

Lucas Johnson

Selected Paintings & Drawings

January 19 – February 16, 2019

Reception Saturday, January 19, 5-7 pm

Gallery Talk with Betty Moody, 5 pm

Moody Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Lucas Johnson (1940-2002). Johnson has been represented by Moody Gallery for over 40 years, beginning in 1975 when the gallery opened. In addition to twelve solo exhibitions held at the gallery during his lifetime, *Selected Paintings & Drawings* marks the gallery's fifth exhibition of his work since his death. The subjects of his work were always from his imagination, shaped by his love of the ocean, his awe of nature, and most of all, his humanism. Walter Hopps, the Menil Collection's founding director, described Lucas as an imagist, a term he defined as "art that employs recognizable images in fantastic or unreal juxtapositions ... constructed in the same way as poetry, using imagery as visual metaphors."

Lucas Johnson was born in Hartford, Connecticut, raised in southern California, and died in Houston, Texas. He never took formal art classes and taught himself to draw and to paint. In the 1960s he moved to Mexico City and was more interested in the human condition than the prevailing Minimalism and Conceptualism dominating the United States' art world at that time. Johnson began to exhibit in public cultural institutions as well as galleries and was represented by Galeria de Arte Misrachi in Mexico City and David Gallery in Houston. After moving to Houston in 1973, he was represented by Covo de longh (1976-78) and by Moody Gallery (1975-present).

Johnson's work can be seen in the collections of many institutions including the Menil Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston Airport System, Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Houston Art Museum of South Texas, San Antonio Museum of Art, Wichita Falls Museum, Amarillo Art Center, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Mexico Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Smithsonian Institution, and the Brooklyn Museum. His work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions including at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Galveston Arts Center (1994), Station Museum (2005), Rockport Center for the Arts (2004), Museum of East Texas (2001), Art Museum of Southeast Texas and Art League Houston (1996), the Serpentine Gallery, London (1987), Shenzhen Art Institute, Shanghai, China (2016), and many institutions in Mexico.

In 2006 the Houston Artists Fund published the book, *The Art and Life of Lucas Johnson* with a preface by Walter Hopps, an essay by art historian Edmund P. Pillsbury, and a chronology by Patricia Covo Johnson. The book is distributed by the University of Texas Press, Austin and is available for purchase at Moody Gallery.

Selected Paintings & Drawings is on view at Moody Gallery Saturday, January 19 through Saturday, February 16, 2019. A reception will be held Saturday, January 19 from 5-7 pm with a Gallery Talk by Betty Moody at 5 pm.