

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACK YOUNGERMAN works on paper 1951-2012

May 3 – June 3, 2013



*Blue Delfina*, 1961, gouache on paper, 21 ½ x 20 ½ in



*Soft Composition*, 1953, oil on paper, 4 7/8 x 4 1/8 in

Since his formative years in Paris in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Jack Youngerman's career has yielded distinctive explorations of invented form, organic abstraction, symmetry and asymmetry, employing a vibrant palette in varied mediums. From May 3 through June 3, The Drawing Room is pleased to present a window on the development of Youngerman's visual language in an exhibition of works on paper that includes rare early collages, colorful gouache and oil paintings, and select India ink compositions - all notable for their rigor, freshness and graphic impact.

The show traces Youngerman's progression beginning with early hard edge geometric works informed by Mondrian and mid-century French painting, through the emergence of his iconic vocabulary of shapes inspired by elements of nature and non-western iconography, to the most recent manifestations of his interest in symmetrical arrangements that radiate outward from a central core. Ranging from 3 to 21 inches square, some works emphasize a freedom of experimentation while others stand as fully resolved artworks that shed light on his path toward and beyond related monumental canvases.

Along with other American artists of his generation, Youngerman spent his formative years in Paris where he arrived on the GI Bill in 1947. After enrolling at the École des Beaux Arts, his formal studies were enhanced by immersion in the Parisian art world and travel to other countries in Europe and the Middle East. In Paris, visits to the studios of Constantin Brancusi and Jean Arp, and his discovery of Matisse's monumental cutouts provided pivotal inspiration for his unique approach to bold organic abstraction. This development in his work began to crystalize around 1955, and by 1956 his paintings had attracted the attention of New York art dealer Betty Parsons who encouraged his move to New York later that year. Settling in lower Manhattan's Coenties Slip, he immediately engaged in the milieu of the contemporary New York art scene, with neighbors and friends who included Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin and Robert Rauschenberg.

Several gouaches on view reveal the breakthrough in Youngerman's work in the mid-1950s that introduced expansive interpenetrating shapes to the picture plane. Cropped at all edges to contain the dynamic thrust of his

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signature forms, works such as *Blue Delfina* (1961) feature energetic contours and carefully calibrated surface tension. Youngerman's irregular paint gestures of this period gave way to a more fluid, yet powerful lyricism in the curving imagery of the following decade. The large India ink *August 31, 1966* belongs to a series of iconic black and white drawings that embody perfect harmony without sacrificing strength. Around this time the artist delved into an exploration of symmetry that he has taken to new heights in the past five years. Several exemplary small paintings on handmade Japanese paper present faceted, escutcheon-like patterns that radiate outward into crisp, color-saturated kaleidoscopic images.

Over six decades, working on paper has been central to Youngerman's practice, evidenced by photographs of his past and present studio environments in Paris, New York and Long Island. Innumerable ink and gouache compositions scattered across surfaces or pinned to walls are fundamental to his process of considering and refining nuances of form, hue and texture while engaging fresh use of materials. Youngerman's voice is one of consistence, forever reaching for new discoveries and reinvention while sustaining a clear identity as a significant figure in the field of abstract painting.



Jack and Duncan Youngerman, Coenties Slip studio, c. 1959



Laurie Lambrecht photograph of Youngerman's studio c. 2010

Jack Youngerman lives in Bridgehampton, New York where he has had a studio since 1968. He has been the subject of more than fifty one-person exhibitions, including a 1986 retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. 1958 marked the first of numerous shows at New York's Betty Parsons' Gallery, and in 1959 Dorothy Miller included him in the Museum of Modern Art's seminal exhibition *Sixteen Americans*. His work is represented in many public collections, among them the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Concurrent with The Drawing Room exhibition, the artist's recent oil paintings are featured in New York through June 28 in Washburn Gallery's *Jack Youngerman: Triads Tondos Foils* and through the summer season, *Jack Youngerman: Black & White*, a selection of large scale resin sculptures made in Bridgehampton the 1980s will be on view at LongHouse Reserve in East Hampton.

Gallery hours: Monday & Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10-5; Sunday 11-5

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