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**Hammer Museum Presents *Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings 1963-2019*,  
The First Comprehensive U.S. Survey of the Artist's Drawings and Works on Paper,  
February 2–May 10, 2020**



**Los Angeles, CA)**— The first comprehensive survey in the United States of drawings and works on paper by the Los Angeles–based Paul McCarthy (b. 1945, Salt Lake City), *Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings 1963–2019*, reveals a rarely examined aspect of the artist's oeuvre. The exhibition delves into the significant role of drawing in McCarthy's broader practice, which spans performance, video, photography, sculpture, and installation. By presenting his expansive career of more than five decades through the focused lens of drawing, *Head Space* offers a greater understanding of this influential artist and social commentator. The exhibition presents nearly 600 works, thoughtfully selected from McCarthy's archive of drawings.

"*Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings 1963-2019* underscores the Hammer's special focus on both Los Angeles–based artists and works on paper," says **Hammer Director Ann Philbin**. "Paul McCarthy is not only a major international artist but an iconic figure in Los Angeles art history. His magnificent and varied drawings provide a way to navigate the themes and social critique that reoccur throughout his performance, installation, film and sculptural work."

Produced in thematic cycles, McCarthy's drawings share the same visual language as his sculptural and performance works, evoking and addressing themes of violence, humor, death, sex, politics, and featuring extensive art historical and popular cultural references. His drawings often feature a reoccurring assortment of figures and symbols, culled from Hollywood, fairytales, soap operas, comic books, Disney, and contemporary politics. Yet, in McCarthy's work, these figures are perverse distortions of iconic and recognizable archetypes. The artist explores and subverts a culture of violence and toxic masculinity through hyperbole and grotesque magnification of its worst tendencies. His work skewers mass media and consumer-driven American society, often profanely, by underscoring aspects of cultural repression and forms of latent violence.

*Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings 1963–2019* features works on paper that incorporate and utilize a variety of mediums, including charcoal, graphite, ink, marker, and collage, as well as more unorthodox materials such as ketchup and peanut butter. A consummate and accomplished draftsman, McCarthy approaches his daily drawing practice as a way of thinking — a blueprint for projects and a tool to flesh out complex ideas. Since the 1970s, McCarthy has also incorporated drawing into his performances, implementing it as part of an action and often drawing in character. In recent years, this role of drawing in character has become central to his large scale video performance projects, such as *WS White Snow* (2012-13), *CSSC Coach Stage Stage Coach* (2017), and *NV Night Vater* (2019–). The

Image caption: Paul McCarthy, *Self-portrait*, 1963. Ink on paper, 11 × 8 1/2 in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm), courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth

drawings produced in character for these sessions stand outside of the video performances. In a process McCarthy terms “Life Drawing, Drawing Sessions” the artist and his actors produce drawings in costume among the props and simulacrum of his film sets. These works bring together the materials and crude gestures that have been present in the artist’s work for the greater part of his career.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a related series of Hammer public programs include a conversation between Paul McCarthy and curators Aram Moshayedi and Connie Butler, as well as exhibition walkthroughs led by local artists, critics and academics. A selection of McCarthy’s videos and films will be screened in the Billy Wilder Theater through-out the run of the exhibition. Additional information about these programs can be found on [hammer.ucla.edu](http://hammer.ucla.edu)

### **CURATORIAL CREDIT**

*Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings, 1963–2019* is organized by Aram Moshayedi, curator, and Connie Butler, chief curator, with Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, curatorial assistant, and Nicholas Barlow, curatorial assistant.

### **EXHIBITION CATALOGUE**

*Paul McCarthy: Head Space, Drawings, 1963–2019* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. Published by Delmonico Books, and designed by Purtill Family Business, this exhibition catalogue features over 400 color illustrations alongside essays by Aram Moshayedi, Bruce Hainley and Catherine Damman, and an interview between Connie Butler and Paul McCarthy. The volume will be available in the Hammer Store and online at [store.hammer.ucla.edu](http://store.hammer.ucla.edu)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Born in 1945 in Salt Lake City, Utah, Paul McCarthy studied art at the University of Utah and went on to receive a BFA in painting at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1969. He studied film, video, and art at the University of Southern California, receiving an MFA in 1972. From 1984 to 2003, he taught performance, video, installation, and performance art history at UCLA. McCarthy has had numerous solo exhibitions at various venues, most recently at the M Woods Museum, Beijing (2018), Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle (2016); Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (2015); Monnaie de Paris (2014); Park Avenue Armory, New York (2013); Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan (2010); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2007); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2006); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2005); Tate Modern, London (2003); the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2001); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2000); among many others. Paul McCarthy lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

### **CREDIT LINE**

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### **ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM**

The Hammer Museum is part of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, and offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art. It holds more than 50,000 works in its collection, including one of the finest collections of works on paper in the nation, the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the biennial, *Made in L.A.*, the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under recognized artists. The exhibitions, permanent collections, and nearly 300 public programs annually—including film screenings, lectures, symposia, readings, music performances, and workshops for families—are all free to the public.

### **HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION**

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free, made possible through the generosity of benefactors Erika J. Glazer and Brenda R. Potter. Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11 a.m.–8 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking \$7 (maximum 3 hours) or \$7 flat rate after 6 p.m. Visit [hammer.ucla.edu](https://hammer.ucla.edu) for details or call 310-443-7000.