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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

William Wegman
Writing by Artist
Curated by Andrew Lampert
5 May – 18 June 2022



OMG, 2021

New York, NY: Sperone Westwater is pleased to present *William Wegman: Writing by Artist*, a show of texts, drawings, paintings, early photographs, and videos by the artist dating from the early 1970s to the present, many shown here for the first time. This solo marks Wegman's seventh at the gallery and coincides with *Primary Information's* book of the same name, edited by exhibition curator Andrew Lampert and published in April 2022.

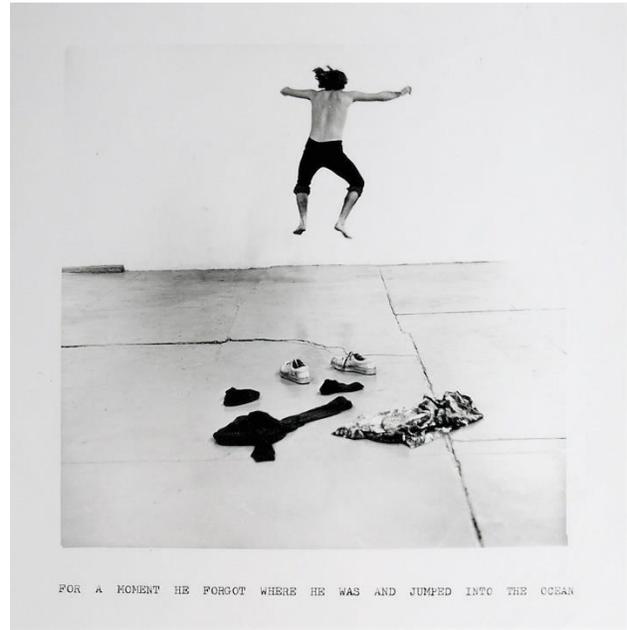
Installed on two floors of the gallery, *Writing by Artist* offers a wide range of entry points into the artist's universe. Spanning five decades, the works in this exhibition all hinge conceptually and pictorially on writing and language, including games, puns, and palindromes—incorporating words in one form or another. In some instances, the text is simply a caption or a few handwritten words. In others, prose delightfully unravels in surprising forms—Wegman types absurd non-sequiturs on Princess Cruises stationary, witty annotations are scribbled onto a curator's essay, and words are deliberately mistranslated, reworked, and fictionalized in graphite and ink on paper.

Featured also are the artist's early photographic works, dating back to the three years he lived in Los Angeles from 1970 to 1973. During this time, Wegman became closely associated with such artists as Ed Ruscha, John Baldessari, and Allen Ruppersberg, with whom he shared both a sense of irreverence towards conceptual art and, more importantly, a sense of humor. Poking holes in the stiffer, more academic, East Coast version of conceptualism, Wegman and his LA colleagues used paint, drawing, video, and photography in ironic ways, often paired with language, to turn didactic formalism on its head. Turning away from handcrafting objects, Wegman utilized domestic, readymade props and banal subjects close at hand. He sometimes used video to improvise short performances—staged vignettes in which expectations are reversed, and puns and homonyms are pursued to absurd conclusions. In one 1972 photograph, the artist is seen jumping away from a pile of his clothes, scattered nearby on the studio floor. The accompanying type transforms the scene: "For a moment, he forgot where he was and jumped into the ocean."

William Wegman: Writing by Artist will be on view at Sperone Westwater from 5 May – 18 June 2022. An opening reception will be held at the gallery on Thursday, 5 May from 5 to 7pm.

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William Wegman was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, in 1943 and received a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston and an MFA from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His work has been exhibited extensively in both the United States and abroad, including solo exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1982); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1988); Whitney Museum of American Art (1992); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2001); and The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2002). The retrospective “William Wegman: Funny/Strange” was held at the Brooklyn Museum, and traveled to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; the Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach; the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover; and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2006-07). The Bowdoin College Museum of Art presented “William Wegman: Hello Nature,” a major survey of over 100 nature-related works by the artist in various media (2012), which traveled to Artipelag, Värmdö, Stockholm, Sweden (2013). “William Wegman: Improved Photographs,” a survey exhibition, was held at the Jepson Center, Telfair Museums, Savannah, GA (2017). In 2018, the Metropolitan Museum of Art organized “Before/On/After: William Wegman and California Conceptualism,” an exhibition of the early 70s work of Wegman and his fellow Los Angeles artists. The Shelburne Museum organized “William Wegman: Outside In,” a comprehensive survey in 2019. “William Wegman: Being Human,” an international touring exhibition of his large-format Polaroids, traveled to venues including Palais de L’Archevêché, Arles; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Christchurch Art Gallery, New Zealand; MASI, Lugano; Photomuseum den Haag, The Hague; and Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, Korea (2018-21). Wegman’s work is in many important public collections including Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Wegman had a solo show at 121 Greene Street, an alternative space in SoHo, in 1990 and solo exhibitions at Sperone Westwater in 1992, 2003, 2006, 2012, 2016, 2017 and 2022.



For a Moment He Forgot Where He Was and Jumped into the Ocean, 1972

Andrew Lampert is a New York-based artist, writer, archivist, and primary in the firm Chen & Lampert. His works have been internationally exhibited at venues including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York Film Festival, Getty Museum, Toronto International Film Festival, and the International Film Festival Rotterdam, among many other venues. He has edited books on Tony Conrad, Manuel De Landa, George Kuchar, and Harry Smith. Lampert was formerly Curator of Collections at Anthology Film Archives, where he preserved hundreds of films and videos and co-programmed public screenings. His videos are distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix.

The book *William Wegman: Writing by Artist* was edited by Andrew Lampert and published in April 2022 by Primary Information. The first collection to focus on Wegman’s lengthy and deeply funny relationship to language, the book is filled with over 300 previously unknown and wildly entertaining texts, drawings, and early photographs spanning the early 1970s to the present.