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FRANK!

A life defined by the freedom to make

Untitled [FF067], 2005, Acrylic on Wood Panel, 34 x 32 in

L'SPACE Gallery is pleased to present ***FRANK!,*** a solo exhibition of **Frank Fristachi** (1942 – 2020), bringing renewed attention to a prolific and fiercely independent New York artist whose practice spanned more than five decades. Drawn from an extensive archive of paintings, drawings, photographs, assemblages, and recently uncovered notebooks, the exhibition offers an intimate encounter with Fristachi's work and the restless, inventive mind behind it. *FRANK!* invites a reconsideration of Fristachi's place within the history of postwar and contemporary art in New York.

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The exhibition emerges from an ongoing examination and organization of Fristachi's extensive archive following his death. Born in Brooklyn in 1942, Fristachi studied at the School of Visual Arts and began his professional life as an illustrator before moving into advertising, where he became an accomplished New York art director. By 1969, his work was already appearing in the Art Directors Club of New York's 48th Annual of Advertising, Editorial, Television Art & Design, with projects for clients including Talon and Waterbury National Bank.

His commercial work went on to receive significant industry recognition, but by the end of the 1970s Fristachi had begun turning away from advertising to devote himself increasingly to his own art. He exhibited at Mercer Street Gallery in 1980, The Drawing Center in 1981, P.S.1 in 1982, and the Berkshire Museum in 1986 and 1988. Despite this early recognition, he ultimately chose a path largely outside the conventional structures of the art world, working relentlessly and independently for the rest of his life. After developing Parkinson's disease in 2005, Fristachi's changing physical abilities increasingly shaped the way he worked, and photography became a more prominent medium in his practice. He remained extraordinarily prolific, continuing to make work until only days before his death in April 2020.

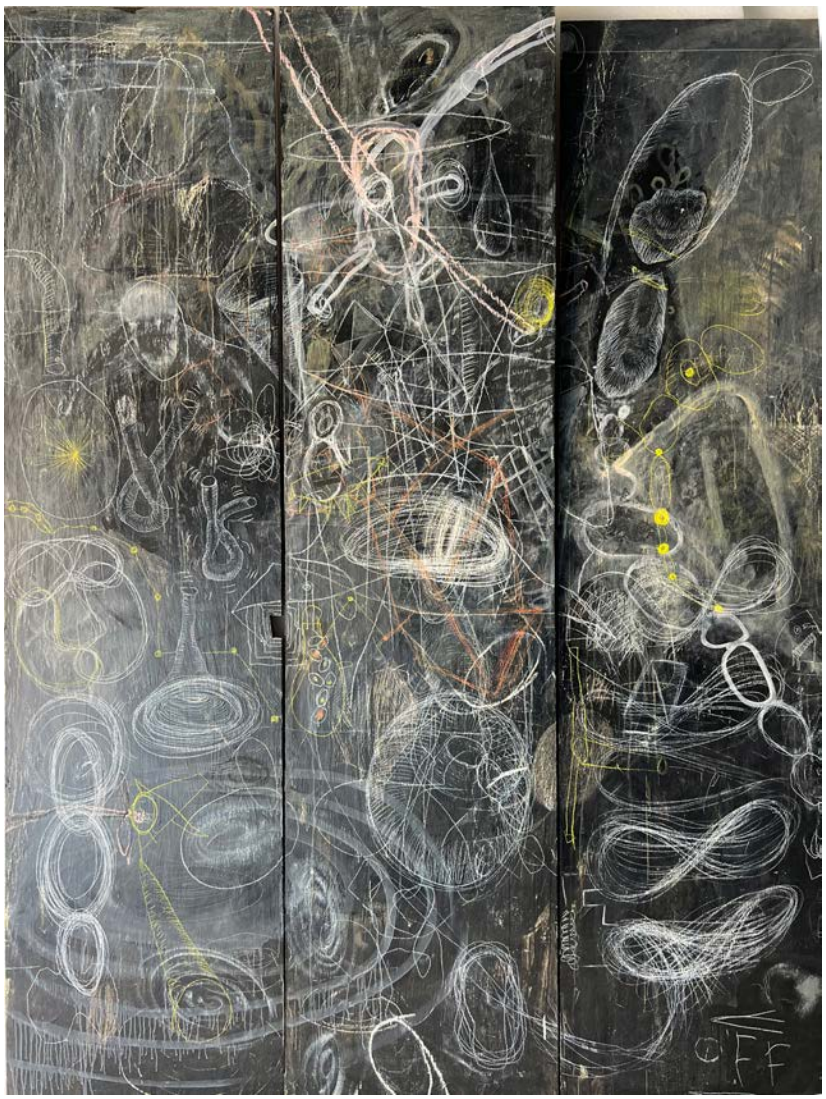
Frank Fristachi: Art director and designer, 48th Annual of Advertising, Editorial, Television Art & Design1969

Notebook 1 (detail)

Fristachi's recently uncovered notebooks provide a particularly intimate view into this restless creative process. Filled with drawings, fragments of language, lists, repetitions, corrections, jokes, obscenities, and spontaneous associations, they reveal a mind constantly at work. Words become images and images become thoughts; the poetic and philosophical collide with the absurd and deliberately crude. Nothing appears too serious or too improper to be played with.

That same freedom runs throughout Fristachi's art. Moving between abstraction and figuration, painting and drawing, photography and assemblage, he resisted settling into a single recognizable style. Images and materials are accumulated, altered, repeated, erased, and reconsidered. At times raw and confrontational, at others playful, intimate, or unexpectedly tender,

the works retain the immediacy of thought in motion.



Untitled [FF081], Circa 1985, Acrylic paint, oil stick and oil pastel on wood, 95.5 x 72 in

FRANK! brings these intimate materials into conversation with works made across Fristachi's career. Seen together, they reveal not a peripheral or occasional practice, but a sustained artistic life pursued over decades with remarkable persistence and independence. Fristachi participated in New York's cultural landscape and received early institutional recognition, yet ultimately continued his work largely outside the commercial structures through which artistic careers are typically sustained and remembered.

The exhibition does not attempt to resolve Fristachi into a single category or construct a conventional narrative around a life that resisted one. Instead, it opens the archive and allows the work restless, irreverent, obsessive, funny, and deeply human to speak for itself.

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ABOUT L'SPACE

Founded in 2023 by artist and curator Lili Almog, L'SPACE Gallery is a contemporary art gallery dedicated to research-driven, thematically focused exhibitions that foreground strong visual languages and experimental practices. The gallery advances cross-disciplinary dialogue and material exploration through original curatorial projects, related programming, and sustained collaborations with artists, curators, and cultural organizations.

Frank in his studio

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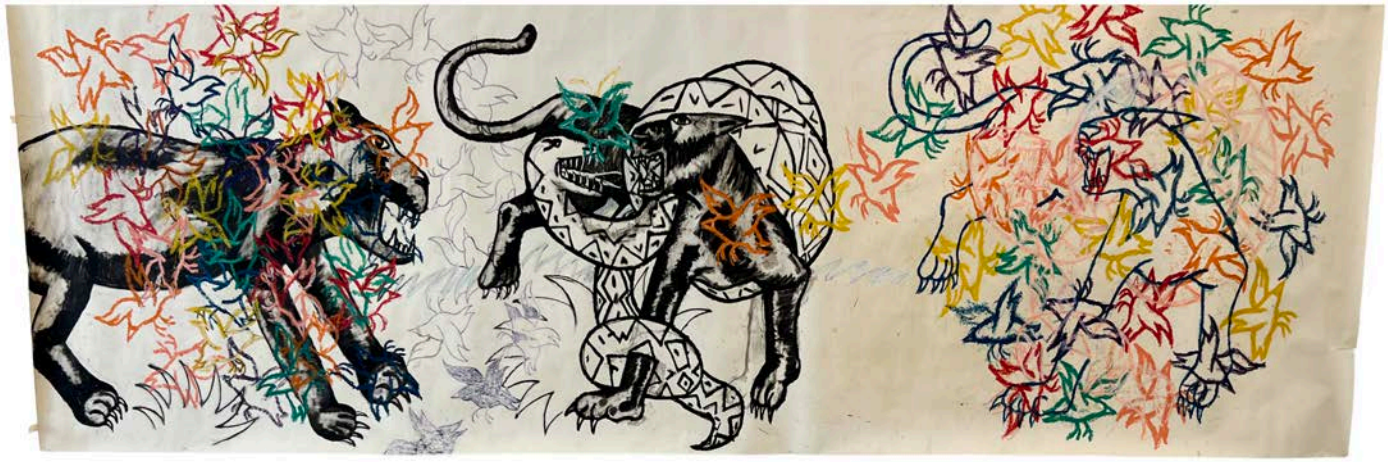
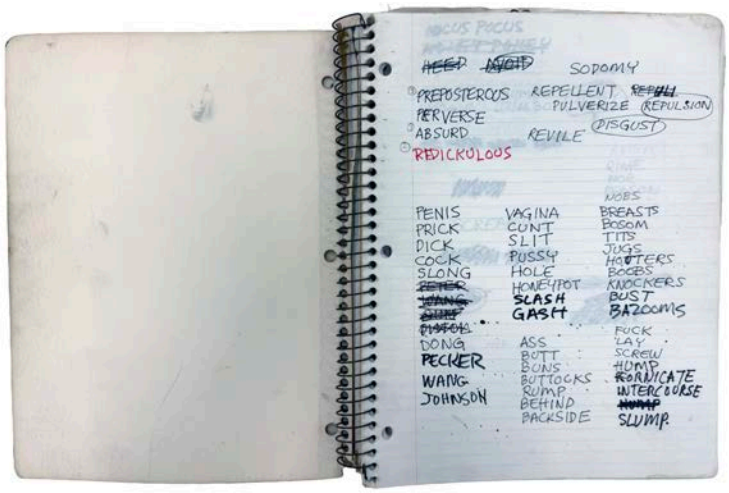
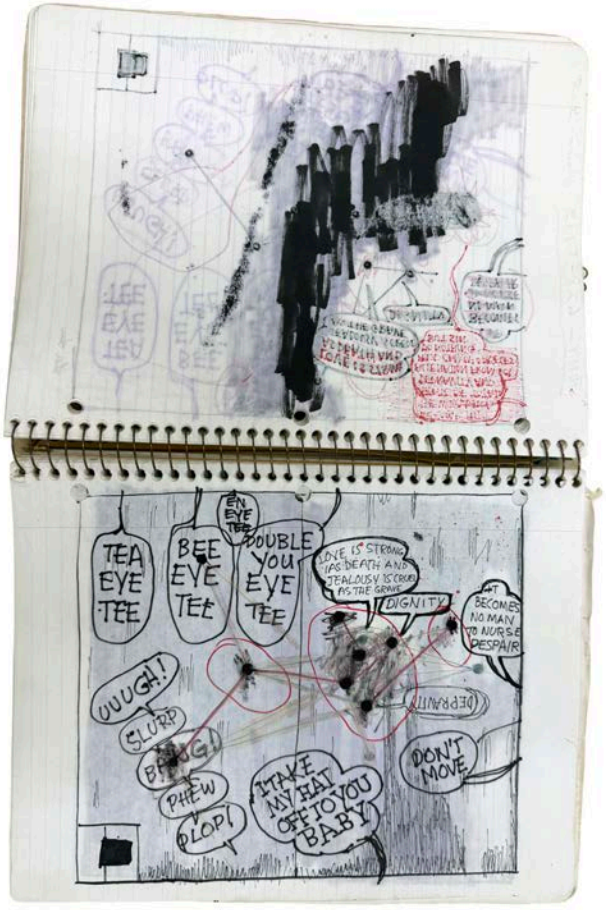


Untitled [FF345], Circa 1980, Paper, Mixed Media, 60 x 195 in



Notebook #1 (detail)



Notebook #1 (detail)

Pop Art Group [FF222.4], Circa 1987,
Acrylic on Canvas, 16 x 20 in

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Untitled [FF100], Circa 2010, Acrylic on Wood Panel, Mixed Media, 96 x 72 in

Untitled [FF068], Circa 2005, Acrylic on wood panel, 19x18 in