

Jim Dine: Tools and Dreams

29 November 2024 – 18 January 2025 (closed 22 December 2024 – 1 January 2025)



Jim Dine; *Color and Ink*, 2023. Hand-coloured etching with charcoal and acrylic paint. Paper and Image: 138.3 x 105.1 cm. Edition of 8

This winter Cristea Roberts Gallery will host a solo exhibition entitled *Jim Dine: Tools and Dreams* (29 November 2024 – 18 January 2025), by the American artist Jim Dine. Now aged 89 years old, the exhibition seeks to illustrate Dine's lifelong relationship with hand-tools, featuring over forty works on paper, some monumental in scale, from the 1970s to the present. Throughout his printmaking career, tools have been a constant for the artist, not only as utilitarian implements used to mark his plates and blocks, but also as 'objects of desire.'

The exhibition opens with Dine's *Five Paintbrushes*, made between 1971 – 1975. For this series, the artist reworked one printing plate through seven different stages, depicting several brushes arranged in a row as if hanging on the wall of a workshop.

Gallery co-director David Cleaton-Roberts describes: "*Far from being simply illustrative, they show Dine developing his vocabulary, seizing upon whatever came to hand and often combining them with the other symbols for which he was to become synonymous.*" In the same way that robes and hearts reappear in Dine's oeuvre as representative of the artist's identity, hand tools also act as an autobiographical motif.

This autobiographical element stems from Dine's childhood growing up in his grandfather's hardware store in Cincinnati, where he played with pieces of pipe, hammers and screwdrivers. These formative experiences led Dine to revere tools, not merely as tools of the trade, but as symbols of creation and devotion.

The artist comments: "*These tools...were developed not by an industrial designer. They were developed by somebody who used them. They were developed by guys who work with their hands.*" Dine's working class background and early childhood are pivotal to the work he makes and as a result, pliers, wrenches, bolt-cutters, etcetera, appear continuously from 1970 to the present.

The exhibition includes his most recent hand-coloured etchings entitled *Color and Ink*, 2023 and monumental new depictions of hammers, exhibited for the first time, taking their titles from the names of friends and family such as *Dan, Nina, Jerri*, 2024.

Alongside traditional printmaking tools, Dine uses power-tools in his printmaking process to grind, scrape and carve his woodblocks and etchings. His use of tools, normally reserved for construction purposes, not only accelerate his process but also create distinctive marks which he combines with other printing techniques. His lithograph, *Tools, The Rainbow*, 1970 incorporates collage, hand-colouring and stamping to reflect his intense mode of working.

Also on display will be the artist's hybrid work, *Asleep with his Tools, Jim Dreams*, 2018, a five-panel hand-painted woodcut mounted onto a folding screen and measuring over 3.5 x 2 metres. Dine's approach is often unconventional and he deliberately subverts what a print should be, challenging traditional boundaries between unique and editioned works.

In the 1970s the artist worked with the French master printer Aldo Crommelynck, producing over one hundred works and developing a close friendship. The meticulous printer, who worked with Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse, was initially startled by Dine's use of power tools over traditional devices – such as the artist's use of dental drills rather than steel-tipped etching tools. However, their collaboration resulted in a great many intaglio prints including the compositional masterpiece, *Tools and Dreams*, 1985, which combined several of Dine's tool images and led to the title of this exhibition.

In a similar approach to Picasso, Dine rarely destroys a printing plate and may re-use imagery in future compositions. Twenty years after the original *Tools and Dreams* print, the same plates were incorporated into *The Five Hammer Etudes*, an etching that encapsulates the artist's lyricism.

Cristea Roberts Gallery

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Dine has long sought to illustrate the connection between life, work and making art, with hand-tools acting as the ultimate symbol of creation. The artist comments: *"At three years old, I remember sitting on the steps outside my grandfather's garage and taking pieces of pipe, and rolling them down the stairs, just letting them go, like a Slinky toy, but it was pipe."*

I would just play with these objects of desire, like a hammer, or I'd grab a screwdriver and pretend to be an adult. I thought they were so beautiful. It was a non-verbal meeting."

The artist's solo show at Cristea Roberts Gallery takes place just as the simultaneous exhibition of Dine's at the Albertina Museum in Vienna combines both prints and drawings and celebrates a generous donation from the artist to the museum's collection.

Tools and Dreams, Dine's thirteenth solo exhibition at Cristea Roberts Gallery, is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring an introductory text by gallery co-director David Cleaton-Roberts.

ENDS

About the artist

Jim Dine was born in 1935, in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. He studied at night at the Cincinnati Art Academy during his senior year of high school and then attended the University of Cincinnati, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Ohio University from where he received his B.F.A. in 1957. Dine moved to New York in 1959 and soon became a pioneer creator of 'Happenings' together with Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Robert Whitman.

Dine is one of the most significant artists of his generation. Since his first solo exhibition in New York in 1960, his paintings, sculptures, photography, and prints have been the subject of over 300 solo exhibitions worldwide, most recently at Palazzo Rocca Contarini Corfù, Venice (2024); Kunsthau Göttingen, Göttingen (2023); Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Maine (2023); Palazzo Esposizioni Roma, Rome (2020); Centre Pompidou Málaga, Málaga (2019); Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (2018); and Centre Pompidou, Paris (2018).

He is one of the most naturally gifted printmakers working today and has been honoured with major print retrospectives at the Albertina, Vienna (2024, 2016); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2017); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2015); Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (2007); Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image Imprimée, La Louvière (2008); Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis (2002); Museum of Modern Art, New York (1978). Dine's work is collected by major museums all over the world. In 2021 the German publisher, Steidl, released *I print. Catalogue Raisonné of Prints, 2001–2020*, the most recent instalment in a series of scholarly catalogue raisonnés on Dine's printed oeuvre.

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In 2023 Dine gifted a permanent installation *House of Words* to Kunsthau Göttingen, Göttingen (2023); he has also made significant donations of prints and works on paper to Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2017); and Albertina, Vienna (2015). In 2014 Dine gifted over 200 prints in single sheets, portfolios and illustrated books, covering a period of fifty-five years, to the British Museum, London, in honour of print publisher and gallerist Alan Cristea. Cristea Roberts Gallery is the exclusive worldwide distributor of Jim Dine's original prints.

Jim Dine lives and works in Walla Walla, Washington and Paris.

About Cristea Roberts Gallery

Cristea Roberts Gallery is a leading international contemporary art gallery with a particular focus on original prints and works on paper. Since its inception, the gallery has commissioned a significant number editions by a wide range of artists, whilst also representing others for their unique works. The underlying ethos of the gallery has always been artist-led. It was originally founded in 1995 as the Alan Cristea Gallery and changed its name in September 2019 to Cristea Roberts Gallery.

Acknowledged as one of the leading galleries in its field of specialty, the gallery's programme is dedicated to publishing, cataloguing, exhibiting and dealing in original prints and drawings by its roster of over 30 important international artists and Estates. It participates in all the major international art fairs and has a dynamic programme of exhibitions hosted in its bespoke space in Pall Mall, London.

The gallery works closely with international museums on acquisitions and loans, and examples of its editions are held in major public collections around the world including Tate, London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Visitor information:

Tues - Fri 11 am - 5.30 pm

Sat 11 am - 2 pm

Closed on Mondays, Sundays and public holidays

(Closed 22 December 2024 – 1 January 2024)

Travel: Piccadilly or Green Park underground station

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