

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

FRED SANDBACK
LE FIL D'OCCAM

8 SEPTEMBER – 27 OCTOBER 2018
OPENING: SATURDAY 8 SEPTEMBER,
6 – 8 PM

"Fact and illusion are equivalents.' 'Trying to weed one out in favor of the other is dealing with an incomplete situation. [...] 'In no way is my work illusionistic. Illusionistic art refers you away from its factual existence toward something else. My work is full of illusions, but they don't refer to anything."

Fred Sandback, 1973



FRED SANDBACK, *Untitled (Corner Piece)*, 1967, grey elastic cord, 18 x 67 7/8 x 18 in.

Galerie Marian Goodman is delighted to present the first exhibition dedicated to the work of Fred Sandback to be held in Paris since 2008. *Fred Sandback: Le Fil d'Occam (Occam's Razor)*, organized in collaboration with the Fred Sandback Estate, pays homage to the radicalism and purity of Sandback's work with a selection of sculptures, drawings and prints made between 1967 and 2002. This first show in Marian Goodman's Paris space echoes the two exhibits at the New York gallery in 1983 and 1985.

Emerging from the American scene of the 1960s, and particularly influenced by Minimalism, Sandback (1943–2003) sought to raise line to a new, pure level by working with acrylic yarn, creating multidirectional networks that map out materially fragile yet precise geometrical forms and volumes in space.

In an essay titled "Fred Sandback, or Occam's Razor," which inspired the exhibition title, Valérie Mavridorakis notes: "Sandback's art can be defined primarily as drawing, eliminating anything that is not line, defined by the quality and thickness of the yarn. Now these lines

appear charged with energy; they cut through the emptiness, cut up bits of space, present us with a diffuse ensemble of perceptual experiences. For this art does not have an *a priori* existence; it is constituted wholly within our experience of it."¹

To achieve this, Sandback developed a rigorous and durable practice. After experimenting with a number of materials in his early works, including elastic cord in *Untitled (Corner Piece)* (1967), in the mid-1970s he settled on acrylic yarn. This could be white, black, or coloured – a choice which was made intuitively in response to the context.

Although each work was developed in conversation with the specificities of the architectural settings, Sandback's three-dimensional works were never limited to a fixed site; they can be reinterpreted. As such, some twelve sculptures, including *Untitled (Sculptural Study, Twelve-Part Vertical Construction)* 1982/2016, or indeed *Untitled (Sculptural Study, Four-part Wall Construction)* 1999/2008, have all been reinstalled in the gallery for this show.

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Based not only on the tension of the lines but also on the invisibility of the system for fixing the yarn in the wall, floor or ceiling, Sandback's sculptures offer a unique aesthetic that helps to stimulate the viewer's imagination.

"When the line draws a plane – for example, a rectangle raised up between the floor and the wall, we tend to imagine it as a transparent partition, as an invisible screen. In this way, two lengths of yarn somehow give emptiness a corporeal presence. Further, while the form remains open, we complete it mentally, tracing imaginary spatial frontiers. In these immaterial labyrinths, the viewer's ambulatory, visual and imaginary aptitudes are constantly being brought into play."²

This exhibition gains a further dimension from the inclusion of several drawings. Always linked to Sandback's sculptures, these have a twofold function, as both preparation and record. Witness a plan for *Untitled (Blue Line, 11 meters long, Konrad Fischer Gallery, Düsseldorf, 1969)*; a drawing from 1995 related to the series of *Broken Line* sculptures, or again, a drawing in black and white pencil on blue paper from 1985 dating from one of his Parisian exhibitions.

Parallel to the gallery exhibition, a selection of lithographs, etchings, screenprints, and woodcuts will be on view at the gallery bookshop, Librairie Marian Goodman, at 66 rue du Temple.

A catalogue featuring the essay *Fred Sandback ou Le Fil d'Occam*, together with numerous illustrations, will be published. It will be launched on October 11, from 6.30 to 8 PM, at Librairie Marian Goodman. Valérie Mavridorakis will give a talk on Sandback's work on this occasion.

¹ Valérie Mavridorakis, *Fred Sandback ou Le Fil d'Occam*, Brussels: La Lettre Volée, 1998, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Fred Sandback was born in 1943 in Bronxville, New York State. He studied philosophy at Yale University and continued to Yale School of Art and Architecture, from which he graduated in 1969. While at Yale, Sandback absorbed the European and American avant-garde traditions.

Sandback had his first two solo exhibitions in 1968, both in Germany: at Galerie Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf, and Galerie Heiner Friedrich in Munich. From the 1970s to his death in 2003, Sandback exhibited in numerous European and American museums, such as Kunsthalle Bern (1973), the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1978), the Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim (1986), Magasin 3 (1991). The Dia Art Foundation began to support Sandback in the 1970s and supported the creation of his own museum in 1981, which remained open to the public until 1996. Several major sculptures by Sandback are permanently on view Dia:Beacon, New York.

In France, Fred Sandback had his first exhibition in Paris in 1970. Le Consortium, Dijon, presented a show in 1984, followed by exhibitions in 1992 and 1998, respectively at the Lieu d'Art Contemporain (L.A.C.) in Sigean and Artconnexion, Lille. Several public collections hold works by the artist, including the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou, the Musée de Grenoble, the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain and Fonds Régionaux d'Art Contemporain - Pays de la Loire.

Since 2003 there have been survey exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein in Vaduz (tour: Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Neue Galerie am Joanneum, Graz, 2005-2006). The Whitechapel Gallery in London and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver mounted major exhibitions in 2011; in 2014 the Kunstmuseum Winterthur (Switzerland) presented the first retrospective of Sandback's drawings (tour: Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop; Museum Wiesbaden).

Press contact: Raphaële Coutant raphaele@mariangoodman.com
Or + 33 (0) 1 48 04 70 52

Galerie and Librairie Marian Goodman are open Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-7pm.