

# TOTAH

SAUL STEINBERG

*untitled*

February 21 - April 28, 2019

TOTAH presents *untitled*, an exhibition of works by Saul Steinberg (1914-1999). This is the first solo exhibition for the artist at the gallery.

A key figure in American art during the postwar era, Saul Steinberg was an explorer of a changing artistic and social landscape. He became notorious in popular culture with his illustrative covers for the *New Yorker*, where he was a contributor for more than 50 years. Beyond this, the art he made throughout his lifetime was philosophical and poetic, as well as painterly. Refusing to kowtow to formalist norms, he crafted a rich visual idiom that eschewed conventional categories and radiated a wistful humor.

In *untitled*, the ink on paper drawing *The Killer* (1966) showcases the ease with which Steinberg communicates a metaphysical theme rooted in comedy. Literalizing the activity of thought, the drawing uses a deft economy of line and color to exemplify the ubiquitous determination to eliminate doubt. Composed of ink as well as watercolors, *Japanese Sunset #16* (1971) highlights the wistful, imaginative aspect of Steinberg's work. Detailing a mock-heroic descent into forlorn isolation, swathes of expressionist color create a backdrop for the bureaucratic imposition of stamps, which form an oppressively official architecture that substitutes for sun or clouds.

In 1965 Steinberg told *LIFE* magazine, "I don't quite belong to the art, cartoon or magazine world, so the art world doesn't quite know where to place me." Travel, writing, and the nature of the creative act itself are just a few of the territories his work encompasses. His artistry preserves a child-like vibrancy and innocence, apparent across each decade of his life. Using literary techniques such as satire and puns, Steinberg emotively details cityscapes or ordinary objects in a way that makes him the visionary diarist of the American psyche.

*Saul Steinberg (Romania, 1914 – New York, 1999) has exhibited internationally for over five decades in galleries and museums, and posthumously after 1999. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., the Serpentine Gallery, London, Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence, France, the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, The Menil Collection, Houston, The Dallas Museum of Art, Texas, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London. He has been featured in over 65 group exhibitions, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Jewish Museum, New York, the Brooklyn Museum, New York, and the Galerie Beyeler, Basel. Public collections with extensive Steinberg work include The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C, the Morgan Library & Museum, New York, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.*

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