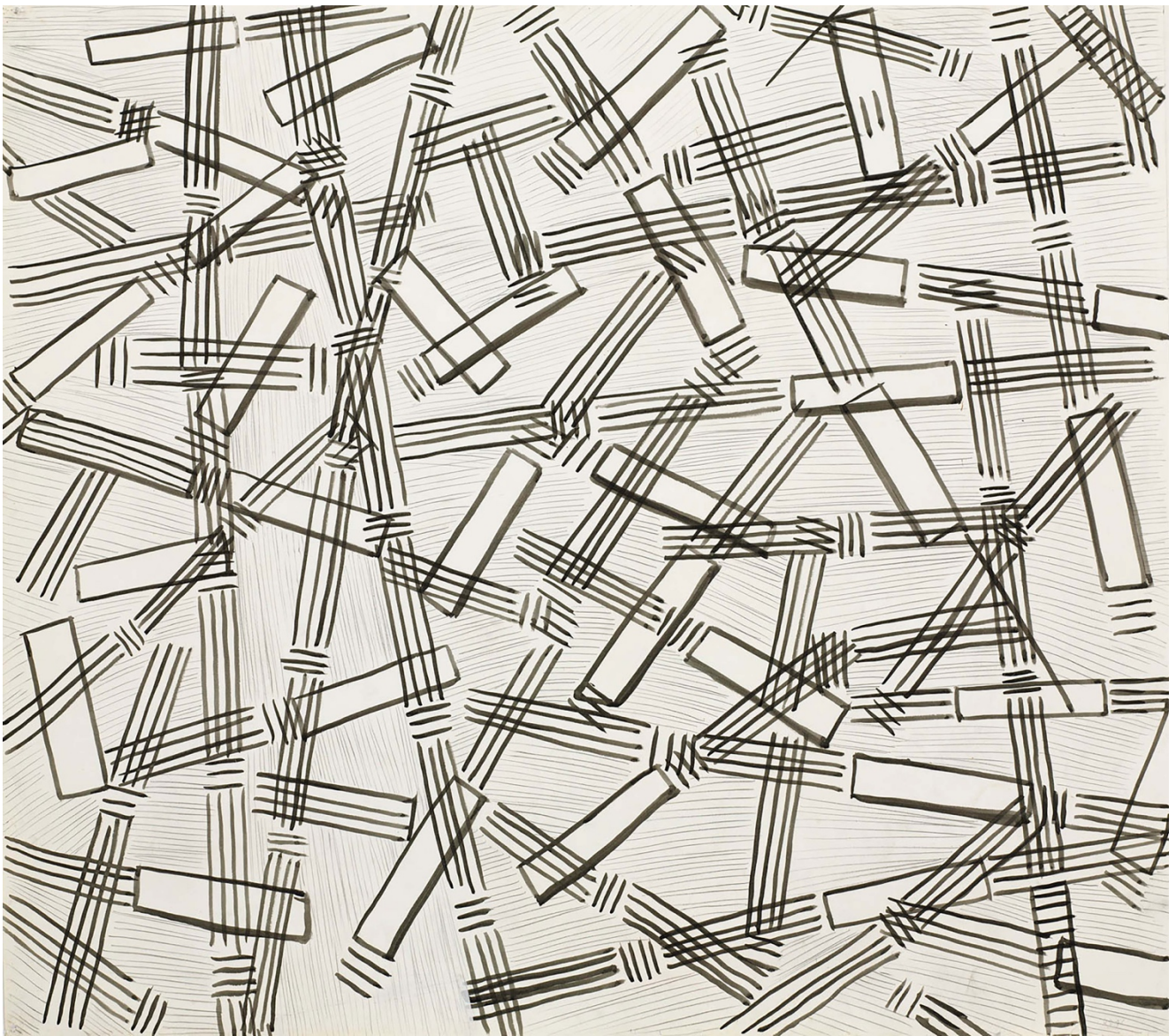


Modern Art

René Daniëls

Works on Paper

Modern Art Bury Street
13 January – 25 March 2023



Untitled, 1976

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Modern Art is pleased to announce an exhibition of earlier works on paper by René Daniëls, his second solo presentation with the gallery. Spanning an industrious period between 1976 and 1987, the exhibition traces the development of Daniëls' oeuvre from its punk beginnings to its increasingly pointed critique of the commercial art world in the latter half of the 1980s.

Shortly after finishing art school in 's-Hertogenbosch in the late '70s, René Daniëls began work on a foundational series of large-scale ink drawings. Their forms loosely suggestive of safety pins, film spools, vinyl records, buildings and even anatomical parts, the works cut up and energetically reassemble the world, making patterns of peripheral objects. In them, rhythms and vibrations seem to be generated by items that themselves suggest ideas of representation, reproduction and transmission. As one reviewer remarked in 1978, "Due to their continual repetition into a scheme, the subjects become an arrangement which is, at the same time, a method [...] the work does not refer to, but is in itself a structure." Imbued with the cartoonish dynamism of crosshatches and parallel lines, these images both picture Daniëls' countercultural backdrop, and anticipate the self-reflexive devices that punctuate his later work.

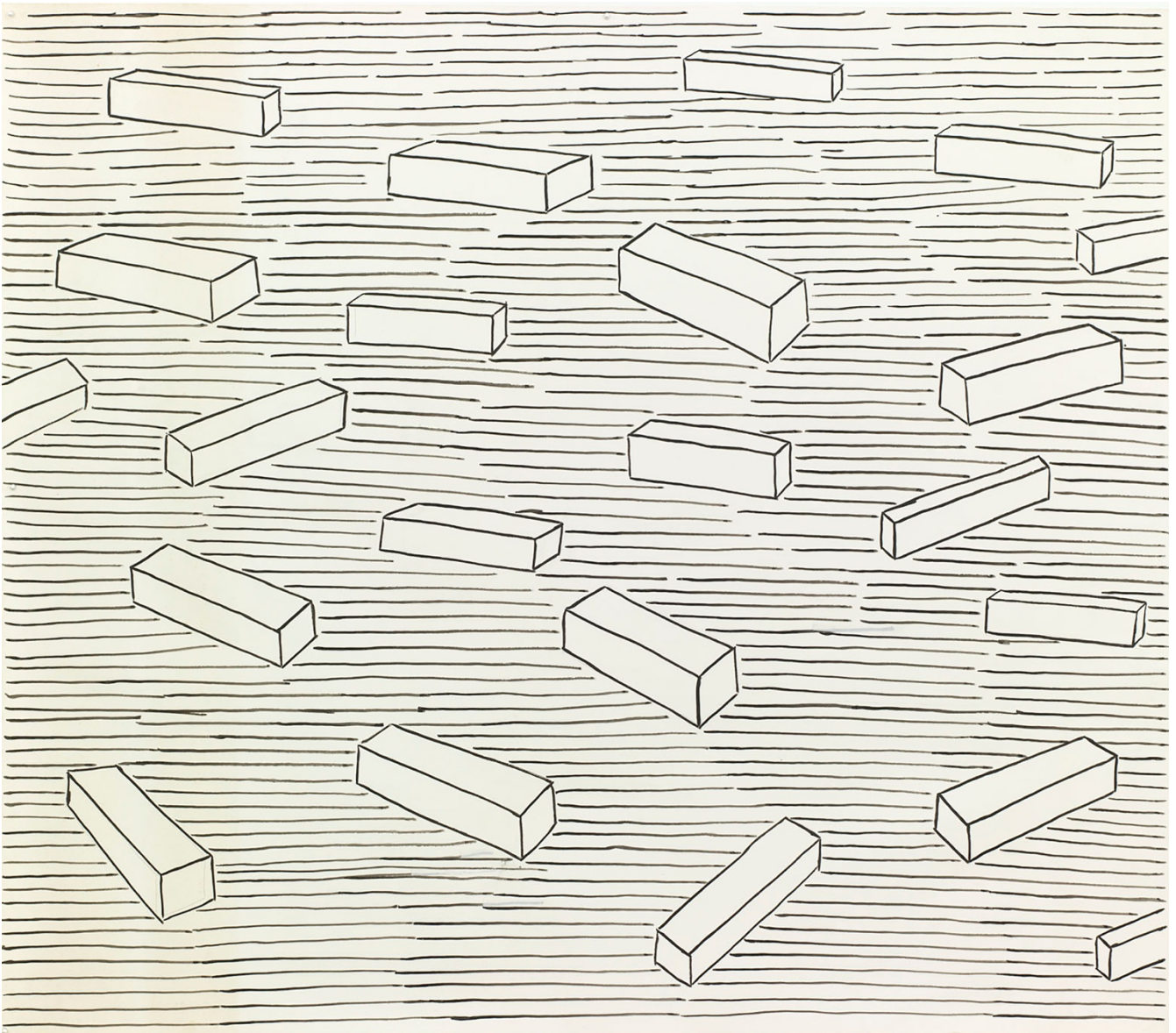
In the ground floor gallery, a group of five works executed between 1976 and 1978 gestures to the original presentation of the series in Daniëls' first institutional exhibition, organised by the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven in 1979. Remixed here in the spirit of their conception, the works throw into focus the act of drawing as a formal and physical exercise, which sometimes demanded of Daniëls that he wrap the oversized sheets of paper around the walls of his home. By restoring bodily presence to the artwork, Daniëls was asserting himself as a protagonist in post-conceptual painting. In these drawings, too, are the beginnings of the artist's longstanding interests in recognisability and the duplicity of *trompe l'oeil*.

In the lower ground floor space, a larger group of works dating from 1976 to 1987 incorporates imagery ranging from dreamscapes and Amsterdam canal houses to Borsalino-shaped heads and Daniëls' iconic bow tie gallery. Certain drawings make reference to the production of art, whilst allusions to art history, and in particular the genres of portraiture and Dutch landscape painting, drive at its reception and periodisation. In-keeping with Daniëls' winking approach, humorous elements reappear throughout.

Daniëls' drawings are widely considered to be as important as his paintings, and the two media have been presented on equivalent terms in exhibitions at De Pont Museum, Tilburg (2007); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1999); and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1986). His graphic works have also been the subject of dedicated exhibitions at Art Stations Foundation, Poznań/The Drawing Room, London (2014–2015); and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1983).

René Daniëls is one of the foremost Dutch artists to have emerged in the twentieth century. Born in Eindhoven in 1950, where he continues to live and work, Daniëls studied at the Royal Academy of Arts and Design in 's-Hertogenbosch and from 1983–1984 attended the studio program at MoMA PS1, New York. He participated in numerous international exhibitions throughout the 1980s, among them *Zeitgeist* (1982), *documenta 7* (1982), and the 17th Bienal de São Paulo (1983). In 1987, he suffered a brain haemorrhage that left him without speech. He resumed drawing in the 1990s, and painting in 2006. In recent years, his work has been the subject of several major presentations including a 2011–2012 retrospective at Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and the 2018 survey *Fragments of an Unfinished Novel* at WIELS, Brussels, which travelled to MAMCO, Geneva, the following year. Daniëls' works are held in collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Groninger Museum, Groningen; Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the Städel Museum, Frankfurt; S.M.A.K., Ghent; Tate, London; the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

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Untitled, 1976