

VENUS

MANHATTAN LOS ANGELES

Jansen, Charlotte, "American major: rare survey of H.C. Westermann's post-war works on show," *Wallpaper**, November 3, 2015

Wallpaper*



What does America look like? It depends on your perspective.

The printmaker and sculptor H.C. Westermann fought in two wars, was a master carpenter, a student at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, and worked for a time as an acrobat. His unique outlook pervades his work's indefinable style and

distinctive obsidian humour. Westermann inspired the next generation of American underground artists, including the Bay Area's 'funk art' scene and legendary Chicago Imagists Hairy Who — but since a 1978 retrospective at the Whitney Museum in New York, there hasn't been an ambitious attempt to survey his work. Opening at Venus Over Manhattan in New York this week, 'See America First' is a major presentation of H.C. Westermann's work.

'I have spent months studying the work and now I have become a total fanatic geek on both the artist, the man and his work. He made very little work — about 350 pieces of significance in the catalog raisonné,' says gallery owner Adam Lindemann, who curated the show. Lindemann was friends with the sons of Allan Frumkin, Westermann's longtime dealer, and came into contact with Westermann's work at their house as a child.

It's through this personal connection that Lindemann was able to access 20 illustrated letters sent from Westermann to Frumkin during a road trip in America. Lindemann says, 'These letters are full of wild drawings and fantasies, they are just amazing.' The

letters will be presented alongside a collection of nearly 80 sculptures and works on paper.

While changing morals, militarism and materialism in pre and post-war US are themes in Westermann's work, he also conveys a complex perspective of nationhood that is a concern as contemporary as ever.