

## Paula Scher

### *The Art of Map Design*

April 11<sup>th</sup> - May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Jim Kempner Fine Art is pleased to announce *Paula Scher: The Art of Map Design*, an exhibition of prints by internationally acclaimed, American-born artist Paula Scher. The exhibition will showcase a selection of the artist's earlier work from 2008 up to her newly released prints from this year. The exhibition will be on view from April 11<sup>th</sup> through May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. An opening reception for the artist will be held Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm.

In the early 1990s, Scher began working with maps to create her own narrative about the way she sees the world. Her father, an inventor and civil engineer, introduced her to the subject in her youth. Her interest in and creative method to map-making has become an extension of her approach to graphic design and is the culmination of a lifetime of being surrounded by maps. Scher creates eclectic and unique cartographic fields that blur the relationship between the ostensible character of utilitarian cartography and subjective artistic inventions.

For this exhibition, the maps from the last decade feature different sets of data, such as transportation flows, trade routes, climate, and population demographics. Coupled with her unique use of color, script, and scale, this use of visual data creates what she has described as being "informational and sensory overloads." Her newly released prints from 2018 reinvigorate her interest in particular cities and allow her to aesthetically translate each city's unique qualities through these in-depth studies. New prints include *Berlin*, *Tokyo*, *Rome*, and *London*.

Of particular interest is her newly revived *World Trade Routes* screenprint created in 2019, nine years after she painted the monumental piece of the same title depicting the different trade routes across the world. As a print, the work is a visual field of constant discovery. The viewer unearths details as s/he follows the routes from continent to continent, country to country, city to city. Further establishing the "informational overload" with her use of color and line, the piece is all at once hectic and serene in its intentional chaos.

Rather than allow them to be exclusively functional and practical, Scher's maps draw from her own memory and personal experience, along with fleeting impressions from the media to demonstrate her personalized understanding of how she views the world. Scher claims that these are by no means "accurate maps." They are, above all, "paintings of distortion," selective information, and ultimately our reality.



*World Trade Routes*, 2019. Screenprint. 35 1/4 X 60". Edition 150.

Known for her role as the first female principal and partner at Pentagram Design, Paula Scher has also been one of the most influential figures in graphic design for over four decades. She has cultivated a long career in developing identity and branding systems for a broad range of clients throughout the world. Described as the "master conjurer of the instantly familiar," her graphic identities for Citibank and Tiffany & Co. have become case studies for the con-

temporary regeneration of American brands while her work for clients such as Bloomberg, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Shake Shack, the Museum of Modern Art, the High Line and the Metropolitan Opera, to name a few, showcase her uncanny ability to fuse high and low and broaden the potential of graphic design to straddle the line of pop culture and fine art. Scher's highly influential work for The Public Theater in the mid-1990s and her recent episode-length feature on Netflix's *Abstract: The Art of Design* series released in 2017 have only further cemented her as a household name and pioneer of the field.

Scher was born in 1948 in Virginia and grew up in Washington D.C.. She studied design at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia before moving to New York City in 1970. She began her career as an art director and has been a principal at the Pentagram design firm at the New York office since 1991. During the course of her career, Scher has been the recipient of hundreds of industry honors and awards including the National Design Award and AIGA Medal. In 2006, she was named to the Public Design Commission of the City of New York and was awarded the Type Director's Club Medal, the first woman to receive the prize. In addition to an even longer list of positions and honors, Scher's work has been exhibited all over the world and is represented in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Denver Art Museum; the Victoria Albert Museum, London; the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Scher is also featured in episode six of the first season of "Abstract: The Art of Design," the Netflix documentary series about leading figures in design and architecture.