

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

George Widener

Born 1962, Kentucky.

George Widener's artwork is as intellectually challenging as it is aesthetically compelling. A high-functioning savant who has channeled his extraordinary gifts of numerical computation into artmaking, Widener struggled for years before his talent was recognized. Born in Kentucky in 1962, Widener was not diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome until he was an adult, making an already difficult childhood even more so.

Following a stint of service in the US Air Force, Widener was diagnosed with depression, and committed to several psychiatric hospitals. He eventually attended the University of Tennessee. He currently lives and works in Waynesville, NC, near Asheville.

Widener's brain has been proven to function as a super-calculator, a gift that allows him to process mathematical information in a radically different way than most people do. By directing his impulse to calculate complex sequences of numbers through stunning, often large-scale drawings, Widener makes visible not only his savant skillset, but also his unique creative talent for reimagining it aesthetically. Far from mere illustrations of mathematical process, his drawings stage through form and content simultaneously, often playing out elaborate numerical puzzles and games, complex puns, palindromes, and informed prophecies. The artist's love for punning is evidenced by drawings of magic squares: squares that contain 9 rows of numbers, in each row of numbers adds up to the same value.

Manipulating time as an artistic medium, Widener's favored vehicle for processing mathematical, historical, and personal information is the calendar. He uses calendars to consider both linear and random historical patterns, giving as much weight to logic as to chance and synchronicity. Often staining patched-together napkins or scrolls with tea to affect the look of parchment, Widener creates preciously fragile compositions that seem torn from the pages of medieval manuscripts, each page layered with accident, palimpsests, and esoteric knowledge. His concern with the future has grown into creating elaborate games for the amusement of machines, whom he believes will gain the ability to think independently by 2050. Despite his relative youth, Widener has earned international recognition as one of the most significant Outsider Artists the world has seen.

- Jenifer P. Borum

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2024

The Apex Is Nothing, curated by John O'Connor and Ken Weathersby, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York, NY

2023

George Widener: Tip of the Iceberg, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2021

Outsider Art: The Collection of Victor F. Keen, curated by Alison Amick, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL

2020

An Alternative Canon: Art Dealers Collecting Outsider Art, curated by Paul Laster, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2019

Memory Palaces: Inside the Collection of Audrey B. Heckler, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

George Widener: Playing Games: Chance, Skill, and Abstraction, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

Doors of Perception, Curated by Javier Téllez in collaboration with the Outsider Art Fair, Frieze New York

2018

George Widener Magic Circles, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY

2015

The Outsider Art Fair Paris, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

System and Vision, David Zwirner, New York, NY

2013

Brazilian Customs Snafu, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York

The Great and Mighty Things: Outsider Art from the Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.

The Alternative Guide to the Universe, Hayward Gallery, London

Georges Widener: Secret Universe IV, Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin

2011

World Transformers: The Art of the Outsiders, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt

2009

In the No, Edlin Gallery, New York Dallas Art Fair, Edlin Gallery, New York

Outsider Art Fair, Henry Boxer Gallery, New York

Tension, Invention, Intoxication and Liberty: Victor Hugo to Martin Ramirez, Jan Krugler Gallery, New York

2008

Elegant Obsessions – Outsider and Visionary Art, Orleans House, London Orleans Gallery, London

2006

Prague City Gallery

2005

Outsider Art Fair, New York

2004

Henry Boxer Gallery, London

VSA Arts Festival, Washington, D.C.

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

American Folk Art Museum, New York Halle Saint Pierre, Paris

Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2013

Keats, Jonathon, "Savant George Widener Makes Art For Robots... But You'd Better See His Berlin Exhibit Even If You're Human," *Forbes*, May 22, 2013.

Rugoff, Ralph, ed. *The Alternative Guide to the Universe*, exhibition catalogue, Hayward Publishing, London 2013.

2011

Gómez, Edward M., *On the Border*, *Art & Antiques Magazine*, February

2010

Patterson, Tom, "Art for the Super-Computers (and Other Audiences): The Obsessive Drawings and Calendrical Codes of George Widener," *World Transformers; the Art of the Outsiders*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurtm, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 2010.

2009

The Art of George Widener by Roger Cardinal and Colin Rhodes (Henry Boxer Gallery)

2005

Cardinzi, Roger. "George Widener: An Obsession with Dates and Calendars," *Raw Vision*, Issue #51

Smith, Roberta. "Untamed Art From the Fringes is a Gust of Bracing Air," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2005

2004

Boler, Kelly. George Widener's Art for Art's Sake, *Rapid River Magazine*, Vol. 7., No. 10

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR

Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland

Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, France

Hamburger Bahnhof National Museum, Berlin, Germany

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC

Treger Saint Silvestre Collection, João da Madeira, Portugal

Museum of the Mind - Outsider Art, Amsterdam