

VAN DOREN WAXTER



AL HELD *Brushstrokes: India Ink Drawings From 1960*

by Phong Bui | July/August 2016

VAN DOREN WAXTER | MAY 12 – JULY 8, 2016

Masonry-like 'pigment pictures' rush back to my memory
Like vengeance. "Give the gesture structure," he shouts
This was how Cézanne built his apples a few decades
Before Sigmund Freud was born.

"Transference" offers no less to the concrete than
Corot's *The Bridge at Narni* in one instance, which was painted
Long before this American made his home in
Camerata di Todi, where I once visited.

Flexing hand and wrist muscle,
Sequencing the mechanics of a wrestling match between
Bold movement swirling in mid air and the solid calligraphy
That resembles Aztec temples
And Ming tombs,
It was the setting sun that forged the separation of his forms.

Exquisite confidence on the wheel, robust turns at the road,
Sudden shifts of speed to invert illusionism.
At all cost, he demands disparate form to disassociate itself
In this particular totality of the pictorial space.

He has always consistently resisted the seduction of
Centripetal relational plots in Cubist anatomy.

These are creations of unending self-arguments
Endlessly caught in between various immense vistas.
Constructivist geometry, typographic character
Appear in his dream to nurture
The alphabets of differences.
Restless syncopation of rhythm, semiotics of field, vehicle in image-signs
Eventually generate *Ivan the Terrible*, *The Big A*, among others.
O Mao, the sun is rising,
Like how W.H. Auden wrote of the author of
Civilization and Its Discontents,
“[A]ll he did was to remember / like the old and be honest like children.”



Al Held, *60-104*, 1960. India ink on paper. 18 x 23 3/4 inches. Courtesy of Van Doren Waxter © 2016 Al Held Foundation, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.