

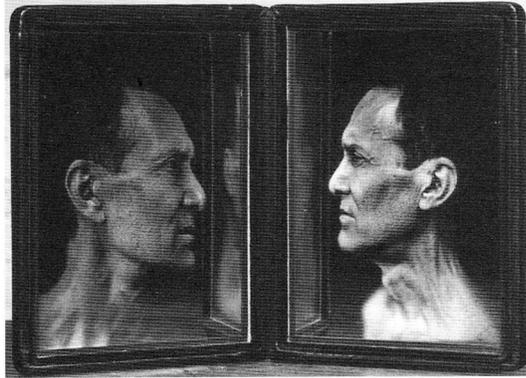
GERING & LÓPEZ GALLERY

The John Cage Award

William Anastasi

Born 1933, Philadelphia, PA

Lives in New York, NY



From earliest memory I have been drawing every day. But I cannot be certain whether this practice started before or after having first heard Jeanette Corona Anastasi, my mom, calmly remark, “But of course the best thing anyone could be in this world is an artist.” How an immigrant without higher schooling came upon this idea was never revealed. But I believe its effect on me was profound. It wasn’t until 1960 before I began to whisper to myself, nervously, “*Maybe you are, after all, an artist.*”

I moved to New York in 1962. That year Philip Guston, by accident, saw three of my plaster on tar paper works. He was enthusiastic about them and wrote a letter recommending my work to Betty Parsons, who had a gallery on 57th Street. She visited my East Village apartment, bought some works for her own collection and placed three other works in a group show in her gallery. I would eventually show works made between 1960 and 1969 in five solo exhibitions in New York. Extraordinarily strong, positive writing reflected some of those shows, but buyers were not impressed.

Visual Artist

1953–1958 University of Pennsylvania

1968–1986 School of Visual Arts,
Professor of Painting and Sculpture

1984 Merce Cunningham Dance
Company, Co-Artistic Advisor with
Dove Bradshaw

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2009 *William Anastasi*, Galleria d’Arte
Contemporanea, Modena, Italy

2008 *Opposites Are Identical*, Peter
Blum Gallery, New York, NY

2001 *William Anastasi 1961–2000: A
Retrospective*, Nikolaj Contemporary
Art Center, Copenhagen, Denmark

1995 *William Anastasi Retrospective
(1960–1995)*, The Moore College of
Art, Philadelphia, PA

1970 *Continuum*, Candace Dwan
Gallery, New York, NY

1970 *Three Conic Sections*, Candace
Dwan Gallery, New York, NY

1967 *Six Sites*, Candace Dwan
Gallery, New York, NY

1966 *Sound Objects*, Candace Dwan
Gallery, New York, NY

1964 *William Anastasi*, Washington
Square Gallery, New York, NY

“The John Cage Award: William Anastasi.” *Foundation for Contemporary Arts*, 2010.

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In retrospect I believe that this neglect was a marvelous example of foul-is-fair. I am now certain that an early financial success would have been an obstacle to a steady and normal development. At present this sort of success has come my way, but it has not diminished my decades-old identification with a remark from the beginning of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: "Nearly through the whole of my work I have felt doubtful what to do."

