Betty Parsons Gallery, January-February 1952

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Sidney Janis Gallery, January-February 1952

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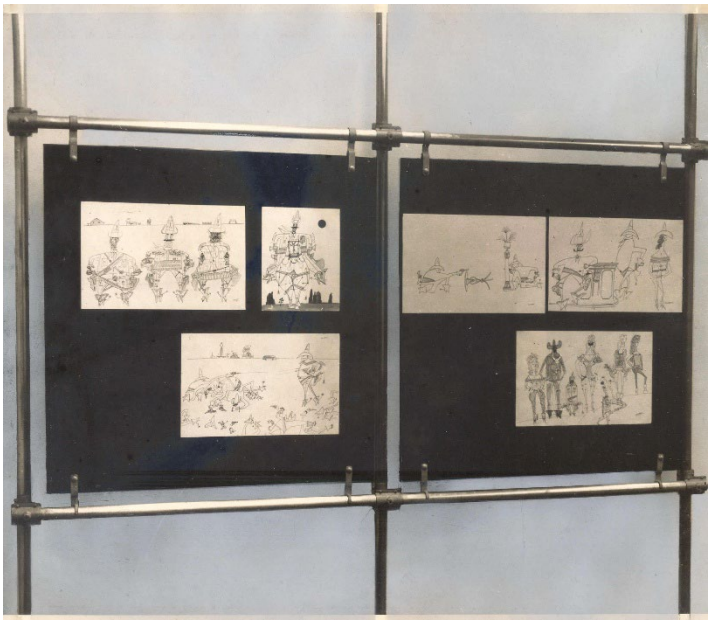
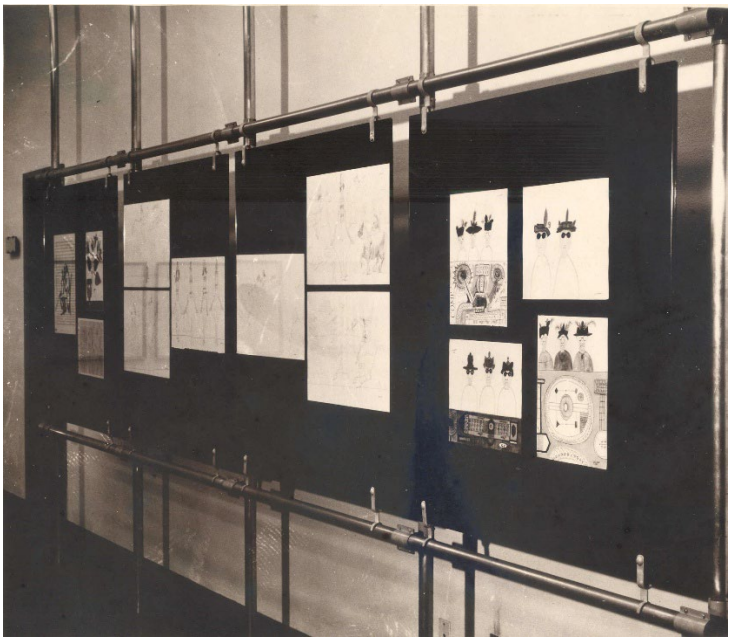
Museu de Arte de São Paulo, September 1952



Museu de Arte de São Paulo, September 1952



Museu de Arte de São Paulo, September 1952

From early 1952 through mid-1956 there were an extraordinary 31 Steinberg exhibitions in the US, South America, England, and Europe. The exhibited works could vary from show to show. Gallery shows were sales shows; sold works were then replaced for subsequent venues. The works in non-sale museum exhibitions could also vary, especially when there were concurrent shows in different venues. Some of the shows were handled by Steinberg himself, others by Sidney Janis or the Galerie Maeght. Uniting all these installations are the subjects of the drawings—but not the subjects *New Yorker* readers were accustomed to gazing at, what Joel Smith calls "the sangfroid that defined [*The New Yorker*'s] personality."[1] Rather, as Steinberg had already done for his contributions to "Fourteen Americans" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946 and to the Galleria L'Obelisco, Rome, in 1951, the exhibited drawings represented themes

of little interest to the magazine: among them, bombing, monuments, architecture, false documents, parades, gambling, women, cats, birds, insects, horses, and hens—the list taken from surviving checklists, which almost always title the works with generic descriptions of type.[2]

Steinberg's habit of keeping his *New Yorker* drawings, which represent only 25% of his oeuvre, out of his gallery and museum exhibitions, remained in practice throughout his lifetime, even as his subjects changed. It is not clear why he chose to maintain this division; he may simply have wanted to give exposure to works that hadn't already been seen by tens of thousands of *New Yorker* readers—works that occupied a great deal of his creative time and were not constrained by the magazine's editorial preferences, its three-column format, and black-and-white rule for interior art.

Below is a list of the exhibitions culled from various archival sources.[3]

Betty Parsons and Sidney Janis Galleries, New York, January 28-February 16, 1952
: Sales show. There were 114 works in the Parsons segment, of which 63 sold during or after the show. A checklist for the Janis segment is not available.

Gump's Gallery, San Francisco, March-April 1952.
: Sales show. The correspondence at the Beinecke indicates that the show was organized directly with Steinberg. The checklist had to be different from the next show, in London, because works for this latter show were shipped in late March and early April.

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, May 1-31, 1952
: Sales show. Organized directly with Steinberg. 85 drawings. Except for three works, the checklist is identical, even to enumeration, to that for the September show in São Paulo.

Museu de Arte de São Paulo, September 18-October (?), 1952.
: Organized directly with Steinberg. 83 drawings.

Frank Perls Gallery, San Francisco, November 22, 1952-January 10, 1953.
: Sales show. Organized directly with Steinberg

Galerie Maeght, Paris, April 14-May 6, 1953.
: Sales show. Janis handled the show with Maeght, then Maeght and the Stedelijk Museum handled the European venues. 110 works. Different from the London and São Paulo shows, except for 10 *Parade* drawings, which seem to have traveled with the European venues that followed Maeght.

From this point on, through the end of 1954, there are simultaneous Steinberg shows in Europe and the US, the latter beginning with that at the Arts Club of Chicago, late April 1953; see below.

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, July 17-August 31, 1953.
: The starting point of the European tour, with 63 works, apparently unsold from the Maeght show. Works were added as the tour progressed. Note the increased number in Dortmund (72) and Hannover (91). The tour ends with the Frankfurt venue in late 1954.

Galerie Blanche, Stockholm, November 1953

Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund, January 9-February 7, 1954.
: 72 works.

Kunstmuseum Basel, February 15-March 31, 1954.

Leopold-Hoesch Museum, Düren, April 15-March 15, 1954 (circa).

Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, June 28-August 1, 1954.
: 91 works.

Kunst- und Museumsverein, Wuppertal-Eberfeld, August-September 1954.

Overbeck-Gesellschaft, Lübeck, October-November 1954.

Frankfurter Kunstbabinett, Frankfurt, November -December 1954.
: Last stop on the European tour.

Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, April 28-May 19, 1953.

Sales show. Organized with Janis. 47-51 drawings.

Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, June 1953, as part of the 2nd Festival of the Creative Arts.

Sales show. 45 works. Shipped directly from the Arts Club of Chicago. \

Viriginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, "Drawings by Steinberg," November 27, 1953-January 3, 1954.

Organized with Steinberg. 47 works. This was the show that toured 10 US venues under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts beginning in July 1955; see below.

Institute of Contemporary Arts, Washington, DC. February 1954 (?)

A different institution from the like-named one in London; see https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/institute-contemporary-arts-records-9688/historical-note
Exhibitions were held at the Corcoran Gallery and other DC institutions.

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, May 2-30, 1954.

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, November 23, 1954-January 16, 1955, "Saul Steinberg: Drawings."

50 works.

Below begins the exhibition circulated by the American Federation of Arts, the same exhibition of 47 drawings held at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in 1953-54, but now under the title "Cartoons by Steinberg." On September 28, 1955, after the second venue, Muriel Christison, Associate Director of the Virginia Museum, wrote to Steinberg: "…the exhibition of your work is so popular that the American Federation of Arts has more requests for its showing than it can fulfill. How do you feel about extending the loan period [for one year]…to July 1957?" Steinberg responded on October 21: "I am a bit late in answering your letter, but I hope I can still make it in time to keep the traveling show from being extended." He explained, apparently concerned with over-exposure: "I think it's been around too long as it is and the pictures were pretty tired even after the first year " (he is referring to the Virginia Museum exhibition).

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, July 7-26, 1955.
Atlanta Public Library, Atlanta, Georgia, August 22-September 12, 1955.
Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, October 1-21, 1955.
Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, Connecticut, October 31-November 21, 1955.
Hunter Gallery of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee, December 5-26, 1955.
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, January 9-30, 1956.
Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, February 14-March 5, 1956.
University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, March 15-April 5, 1956.
Special Services Branch, Fort Crowder, Missouri, April 11-May 2, 1956.
Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 10-31, 1956.

NOTES

[1] Joel Smith, *Steinberg at The New Yorker* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005), p. 23.

[2] This practice makes it difficult to identify specific works unless installation photos survive or a drawing was reproduced in one of the few, sparsely illustrated catalogues of the shows.

Steinberg's first show in the US, was "Drawings in Color by Steinberg, Paintings by Nivola" at the Wakefield Gallery, New York, managed by Betty Parsons, April 12-24, 1943. Here Steinberg, who had been in New York for only ten months, was newly inducted into the Naval Reserve and awaiting orders to ship out, exhibited watercolors he had produced while in Santo Domingo, 1941-42. His second exhibition, at Young Books, New York, in 1945 exhibited drawings from the just-published *All in Line*.

[3] Saul Steinberg Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Mss. 1053

Box 3, folder 36, incoming correspondence, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Box 51, folder 921, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Box 95, folder 2059, exhibitions in Germany
Box 100, folders 2108-2112, Parsons-Janis shows
Box 100, folder 2132, Janis Gallery accounts
Box 285, binder with installation shots, Parsons-Janis and Frank Perls

Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

American Federation of Arts records, box 73, folders 55- 57
Frank Perls Papers and Frank Perls Gallery records, box 21, folder 19

Brandeis University, The Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Archives
Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Archives
Newberry Library, Chicago, Arts Club of Chicago records, box 46, folder 622.
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Archives