

Press Release

**William Copley**  
***Paintings and Mirrors***

12 Jun – 26 Jul 2014

Michael Fuchs Galerie is happy to announce the William Copley exhibition „Paintings and Mirrors“ at June the 12th. William Nelson Copley (\*24/01/1919 – 07/05/1996) was not only an extremely active art dealer, collector and gregarious networker, who connected the avant-garde on both sides of the Atlantic; he was first and foremost a free-spirited painter. With his raw, imaginative style he left behind a body of work whose unique artistic position has attracted increasing public attention through numerous solo shows over the last several decades.

Adopted by entrepreneur and future senator Ira C. Copley and his wife Edith and after an eventful youth, Copley eventually found his vocation as an important protagonist in the burgeoning American art scene in around 1947. Besides his ambitions as an art dealer and collector, he also began his career as a painter during that time, supported and encouraged by his close friend the artist John Ployardt. Perhaps it is due to Copley's fascination with the works of his surrealist friends – none other than Marcel Duchamp, René Magritte, Max Ernst and Man Ray – or perhaps it is his innate trust to transpose his preoccupations directly onto the canvas; in any case, a very unique visual language develops in those early years. This pictorial language addresses social norms and eroticism with its content, and formally borrows from Matisse, comic books and advertising imagery. Thus an oeuvre was created, which depicted in numerous drawings and paintings a colourful, ornamental and very subjective kind of Pop-Art. Despite the assumed naivety, a certain American Way of Life shines through the imagery, whose dominating forces are sexual allure and masculine competition, in the midst of a well-furnished nation. Due to a lack of evidence, it remains unclear whether these are simply daydreams or profound personal experiences; as is so often the case, the truth may lie somewhere in between.

William Copley's works have been exhibited in solo exhibitions in numerous important art institutions, for instance at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (1966), at the Documenta Kassel (1972/1982), at the Kunsthalle Bern (1980), at the New Museum for Contemporary Art New York (1986) and at the Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden (2012). A selection of the renowned galleries having represented Copley's work for many years in numerous solo shows include David Nolan Gallery in New York, Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York and Galerie Linn Lühn in Düsseldorf. Copley's works are also included in many public and private collections, such as the MOCA in Los Angeles, the MoMA in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Modern Art, TATE Britain, Museum Frieder Burda in Baden Baden and the Collection Falkenberg in Hamburg.