A select group of sculptures and drawings, from 1955-1977, by the late artist H. C. Westermann are now on view at Franklin Parrasch Gallery. These works are highlights from the retrospective exhibition *H. C. Westermann West* held at the Richmond Art Center (Richmond, CA) in the Fall of 1997.

Curated by sculptor David King, the Richmond show included a vast and passionate display from all periods of Westermann's sculpture and drawing career, as well as many illustrated letters which had not been previously exhibited. The catalogue for *H. C. Westermann West* was designed as a tribute to Westermann and includes letters, memoirs, comments and pictures of Westermann-inspired works from a number of West Coast artists such as Ed Ruscha, Richard Artschwager and Robert Arneson.

Westermann was a master of complexly ambiguous statements that were in reaction to the anarchic world he perceived around him. Humor was an integral element in his comments and critiques. It is this use of high and low comedy that adds a humanist, life affirming quality to his pieces -- at once expressing the futility and perseverance of human endeavor.

Westermann's methods of construction owe much to his experience as a part-time carpenter and furniture maker. He was a consummate craftsman and had a knack for continually making unusual and interesting choices which resulted in spiritually charged work with a healthy disregard for what a fine art object is "supposed" to look like.

Prior to pursuing a full-time career as an artist, H. C. Westermann had been an officer in the Marines (including a two-year tour of duty on the USS Enterprise during World War II), travelled throughout Asia as an acrobat with the USO and fought in the Korean War.

Westermann first entered the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1947 to study commercial design. After being discharged from the Marines in 1952, he returned to the Art Institute of Chicago -- this time in the department of fine arts, and worked and lived in Chicago until the early nineteen sixties. Westermann then settled in Brookfield Center, Connecticut where he lived with his second wife Joanna Beall until his death in 1981. In 1978 the Whitney Museum of American Art hosted a major retrospective exhibition of Westermann's work which travelled to the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Des Moines Art Center, the Seattle Art Museum, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago will be hosting a major retrospective exhibition of H. C. Westermann's work in the Fall of 1999 to be accompanied by an exhibition catalogue and catalogue raisonne.