

HEMPHILL

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**ROCKNE KREBS: The Smoke Drawings
March 19 - April 30, 2016**

Washington DC — HEMPHILL is pleased to announce the exhibition, *ROCKNE KREBS: The Smoke Drawings*, opening on Saturday, March 19, with a public reception from 6:00 - 8:00pm. The exhibition will remain on view through April 30, 2016.

While serving in the Navy Reserve (1962-65), Rockne Krebs learned celestial navigation, inspiring his interest in light, leading to his first laser light work "Sculpture Minus Object", 1968. By the early 1970s Krebs was a rising star. Blasting geometric arrangements of laser beams across vast spaces drew curators as well as scientists to Krebs' studio. There had never been anything like his work. During the course of a four-decade career, Krebs created over forty public commissions, some temporary, some intended to be permanent. Due to changing civic administrations and insensitive real estate development, only four public light sculptures exist today. Conversations about the re-construction of some of these pieces have begun to take place. Presently it is Rockne Krebs' works on paper that provide the greatest insight into this revolutionary artist's career.

In 1972, Rockne Krebs received a Guggenheim Foundation grant. After a succession of experimental light sculptures the artist wished to devote time to drawing. Krebs realized that his numerous ideas for pieces exceeded his immediate ability to fabricate them; the grant afforded him the time to create graphic works describing the designs for future sculptures. At the same time, Krebs sought to create drawings expressing the atmospheric and ephemeral qualities of his light works. Pushing beyond the traditional means of rendering, Krebs mastered a process for controlling and capturing smoke as a means of drawing. From 1973-1975, he produced numerous "smoke drawings." As evocative as his light sculptures, they added an emotive dimension and personal scale to his oeuvre. *ROCKNE KREBS: The Smoke Drawings* is the gallery's first Krebs show. It is the beginning of renewed attention to an artist who was, nearly 50 years ago, at the forefront of art and technology.

Accompanying the Krebs Smoke Drawings will be a selection of works on paper by Leon Berkowitz, Gene Davis, Thomas Downing, Sam Gilliam, Alma Thomas and Anne Truitt. Krebs worked with and was influenced by artists of the Washington Color School, sharing their affinity for experimentation with color and line.

Rockne Krebs (1938-2011) was born in Kansas City, MO and came to Washington, DC in 1964. His work is represented in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, The Brooklyn Museum, the High Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Phillips Collection and the Smithsonian American Art Museum among many other public and private art collections.

HEMPHILL was founded in Washington DC in 1993. The exhibition schedule features modern & contemporary art in all media by artists ranging from emerging to mid-career to modern masters.

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment.

Image: Rockne Krebs, Untitled, 9/73, 1973, candle smoke, airbrush on paper, 9 7/8" x 9 7/8" © Estate of Rockne Krebs/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

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