

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANDREW EDLIN GALLERY TO REPRESENT GEORGE WIDENER

Andrew Edlin Gallery is delighted to announce that it has become the exclusive representative in the United States for American artist **George Widener** (b. 1962). Widener is renowned for his uncanny aptitude for sophisticated mathematical relationships and calculations that inform his visionary outlook on history and the world. The gallery will showcase the artist's works in a solo exhibition in May 2023 and feature them at the Outsider Art Fair, Art Basel Miami Beach, and other high-profile fairs.

Widener's compositions are often executed on patched-together napkins and scrolls stained with tea to affect the look of parchment. Seemingly torn from ancient manuscripts, his works are layered with accident, palimpsests, and esoteric knowledge, incorporating elaborate numerical puzzles and games, complex puns, palindromes, and prophecies informed by historical events.

Widener's favorite vehicle for processing visual information is the calendar; for him, time is an artistic medium. He considers both linear and random historical patterns, giving as much weight to logic as to chance and synchronicity. The artist is a calendar calculator (or *savant*) whose brain functions like a super-calculator, processing mathematical information in a radically different way from the normal populace. Neuroscientist Dr. Joy Hirsch of the Yale School of Medicine conducted a study with Widener using magnetic resonance imaging, and in 2014, discussed her findings on a panel at the American Folk Art Museum on the occasion of the exhibition *Self-Taught Genius*.

Widener, who is self-taught, first became known in the Outsider Art field in the mid 2000s for his arresting depictions of *the Titanic*, and has since earned critical recognition within the broader, international contemporary art scene. Stylistically or formally, his drawings share unexpected affinities with other art forms, from medieval cosmological maps, early-modernist, geometric/abstract images that evoke a sense of the spiritual, and minimalist drawings, to conceptual art that uses discernible patterns or strange combinations of regularity and chance found in quantitative data on events or phenomena.

Most recently, Widener, who was born in Kentucky and has lived in North Carolina and Thailand (he is now based in South Carolina), has been helping with humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine. In Kyiv and the war-battered cities of Irpin, Bucha, and Borodyanka, he has made unique illustrated artist's books — he refers to them as “sketchbooks” — and maps that bear his signature compositional style, incorporating calendars and dates.

“My art has been moving in new directions,” says Widener. “While I'm still fascinated with dates and numbers and still find refuge in them, I've also been making new works without them, such as some pen-and-ink and charcoal drawings about crazy, congested traffic in Asia... I still have dreams and visions of a machine-dominated future world, a mechanized reality.”

George Widener's work has appeared in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe. In addition to a solo exhibition, *Secret Universe*, at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin

(2013), group exhibitions have included *World Transformers: The Art of the Outsiders*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2011); *The Alternative Guide to the Universe*, Hayward Gallery, London (2013); *System and Vision*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York (2015), *Memory Palaces: Inside the Collection of Audrey B. Heckler*, the American Folk Art Museum, New York (2019); and *Outsider Art: The Collection of Victor F. Keen*, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago (2019).

The artist's work can be found in many notable public and private collections, including, among others, the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland; Le Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and the American Folk Art Museum, New York.