

civic room

Picture(s): Your California Dream

Private view: 7 October 2009, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Dates: 8 October – 8 November 2009

Civic Room is pleased to present *Picture(s): Your California Dream*, drawing upon a selection of works by artists who have lived and worked in California and have contributed to the international lexicon of conceptual art. The exhibition aims to present a succinct collection, offering a glimpse of the progenitors and later adherents of this artistic praxis. Spanning four decades and three generations *Picture(s)* explores, in brief, the movement's foundations and legacies through the work of Bas Jan Ader, Jennifer Bolande, Allen Ruppersberg, Ed Ruscha, Tom Simpson and Christopher Williams.

Included as forerunners, the works *Primary Time* (1974), *Liquor Locker* (1966/1995) and *Vacant Lots* (1970/2003), and *Poster Object* (1988), offer fundamental examples of Ader's, Ruscha's and Ruppersberg's respective practices. *Primary Time* expresses Ader's backhanded yet humorous tribute to Mondrian, by way of a short film of the artist attempting flower arrangement in Mondrian's chosen palette of primary colours. *Vacant Lots* and *Liquor Locker* offer prime examples of Ruscha's early work using photographic documentation in compiling images for his early artists' books. *Poster Object* exemplifies Ruppersberg's long-time interest in the use of common advertising placards, allowing the quotidian to have a role in and, in turn, inform his practice.

A second generation is represented by Christopher Williams and Jennifer Bolande, whose photographic works utilize developed and/or obliquely inherent, condensed narratives to connote an underlying significance. Williams' practice wanders through institutional, social and political critique layered within a web of acute though subtle references and anecdotes. Presented here, *ECT (European Container Terminus B.V.)* (1991) and *As yet untitled (Splatter Gard)* (2006) proffer two examples of Williams' complex puzzles of inference. Bolande's *Marshall Stack* (1995) presents an example of the artist's circuitously developed language, involving idiosyncratic metaphors and alliteration, to form indirect insinuation. Both artists construct images that provoke viewers' reflection on their own knowledge and their ability to decipher complexly layered information and veiled histories.

The third and most recent generation is represented by Tom Simpson, who employs wry, political satire and parody of contemporary practices to forward a biting yet humorous critique. Both *Free Cocktails* (1997) and *In the Darkness and In the Light* (2004) incorporate a facetious, punk aesthetic to dramatic effect, underscoring a fiercely sardonic streak in the artist's work.

Picture(s): Your California Dream has been curated by independent curator and private dealer Thomas Rugani, who presently resides in Paris, France.

For further details or images, please email info@civicroom.org.uk or call 020.7923.4660

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