

## Allen Ruppersberg

March 5 – April 3, 2010

Greene Naftali is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Allen Ruppersberg. This is the artist's first show at Greene Naftali and follows his recent solo exhibition, *You and Me or The Art of Give and Take*, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, and his major inclusion in MoMA's exhibition *In and Out of Amsterdam*, curated by Christophe Cherix. A foundational artist of West Coast conceptualism, Ruppersberg's work has consistently engaged with language, its slippage between mediums, and its situation amidst the familiarities of pop culture.

Ruppersberg often looks back through the records of preceding generations, as well as his own personal history, for material to reanimate. For his new installation work titled *Big Trouble*, Ruppersberg has revisited a comic strip he used for a mail-art piece in 1969. It recounts the character Scrooge's competition with a rich potentate in a show of one-upsmanship for the grandest reputation in Duckburg. In the context of early Conceptualism and the eradication of the art object, Ruppersberg first sent this cartoon anonymously to a list of Los Angeles art world contacts under the acronym "SPPA" (Society for the Prevention and Preservation of Art). Now literally reviving the story, Ruppersberg portrays the contemporary moment's increasingly complex relationship to materiality. Selecting key objects (mostly depictions of monumental sculptures) from the comic, the artist has cut them out, and incrementally enlarged them as standees in the gallery space. Also reprinting the entirety of the cartoon, he has hung the pages along the walls as a legible story, with empty holes denoting where these figures have jumped out into the room. So transforming the gallery space into a comical realm, turning a perhaps too-familiar fiction into a physical reality, and displaying what is left behind, Ruppersberg again turns printed matter into social substance.

Following its presentation at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, Ruppersberg will stage the New York debut of *The Never-Ending Book Part Two/Art and Therefore Ourselves*. The piece consists of an arrangement of brightly colored armatures (modeled from theatrical stage designs of the 1940's), lightboxes, and cardboard boxes full of copies taken from the artist's archive. The color copies—of found photographs, sheet music, record labels and depression-era recipes—also cover the gallery wall, serving both as a backdrop and an index of all the elements included in the "book". W. B. Yeats' "The Circus Animals' Desertion" is reprinted here as well, echoing "old themes" and "allegorical dreams."

Extending the journey of these documents from private possessions to anonymous information, visitors are encouraged to sift through them and keep their own selections. The records on view are for sale, both at a dollar value and for a barter agreement of at least 50 pre-1970 photographs. Ruppersberg so uses an idea of storage and the accessible model of the library as his platform for making present what seems to have passed away. With a "Wave Goodbye to Grandma" and a poetic indexicality, the artist's work re-members our collective past.

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