

02.15.21 / EXHIBITIONS Megan Milks, Matt Keegan

Banner Year

Artist Matt Keegan's new book 1996 is an idiosyncratic close study of one pivotal year in politics, activism, and art. Edited by Svetlana Kitto and co-published by Inventory Press and New York Consolidated, 1996 explores artistic formation in the context of the Democratic Party's slide to the right in the 1990s. The book brings together interviews with two generations of artists—those who completed their undergraduate studies and voted for Bill Clinton in 1996, such as Chitra Ganesh, Elisabeth Subrin, and Seth Price, and those who were born in 1996 and were first eligible to vote in a presidential election in 2016, including Astrid Terrazas and Meetka Otto. Essays by writers such as Mychal Denzel Smith and Natasha Stagg, and archival images from zines, magazines, and newspapers (a Sassy profile of 15-year-old model Ivanka Trump is particularly remarkable), provide further background. 1996 is a yearbook, a time capsule, a queer history, and a treasure trove. Megan Milks spoke with Keegan over video chat days before the wrap of 2020, another astonishing year.



Matt Keegan, *1996* (Los Angeles: Inventory Press, 2020), 12–13. *Time* magazine covers from 1996. Courtesy of the artist and Inventory Press.

MEGAN MILKS: So often, histories are organized according to decades, periods, waves, or presidencies. Why did you choose 1996?

MATT KEEGAN: In the leadup to the presidential election of 2016, Hillary Clinton's platform, especially in comparison to Bernie Sanders's campaign, was akin to that of a centrist Republican, and I wanted to better understand when the Democratic Party began to move to the right. That research led me to read about the formation of the Democratic Leadership Council and the election of Bill Clinton. I chose 1996, the year of Clinton's reelection, over 1992 because the more research I did, the more significant 1996 became. In the ongoing AIDS crisis, 1996 is considered a watershed moment when people with access to healthcare could receive protease inhibitors that made an HIV+ diagnosis no longer a death sentence. It's the year when the general public understood the internet, even though in oversimplified and naive terms, since Microsoft launched Internet Explorer in 1995. Fox News started in 1996. Benjamin Netanyahu was first elected as Prime Minister of Israel. Legislation-wise, the Welfare Reform Act, the Telecommunications Act, and the Immigration Reform Act—all of which have great relevance to the current sociopolitical moment—were all signed that year.

MM: This remarkably dense and generous book brings together archival material, oral histories, researched essays, and a play excerpt. Obviously, you had to be shrewd in your selections.

MK: It was a slow build. In 2008, for my book *AMERICAMERICA*, I interviewed artists who graduated from the School of Visual Arts in 1986. For *1996*, I knew from the outset that I wanted to

look outside of New York. Los Angeles became a central location, as half of the artists attended the University of California Los Angeles at that time. I then worked with Svetlana Kitto to create the choral form that stitches the separate conversations together into one central discussion, which we titled “An Aroma of ’90s Gay Smells.” From there, I started building the broader puzzle and finding contributors to address what I deemed to be the core topics. I worked to create a balance between commissioned essays by journalists and writers, first-person narratives, and interviews to give a reader a diverse and immersive portrait of the time. The point was never to be exhaustive.



Matt Keegan, *1996* (Los Angeles: Inventory Press, 2020). Courtesy of the artist and Inventory Press.

MM: The archival images peppered through the book—are these from your personal collection?

MK: Over the last three years, I started purchasing magazines from 1996 off eBay—*Time*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sassy*, *Us Weekly*—and looking for ads and stories that had a resonance with 2020. I also started saving clippings from the *New York Times* that had a relationship with the midnineties. There are so many gems that didn't make the cut.

MM: Do you have any favorites?

MK: There are so many that are just bonkers. The things that we were sold about the environment—like plastic. The plastic ad is kind of sinister, promoting plastics as “the sixth basic food group.” Or the illustration of sweet animals congregating for a Chevron advertisement, viewed with the knowledge that Big Oil knew about global warming as early as the 1970s but didn't do anything. There are certain things that age to an ouch, and other things that have aged to a laugh. The Kenneth Cole ad, which reads, “The year is 2020. Computers can cook, all sex is safe and it's illegal to bear arms and bare feet...” was obviously perfectly timed for my use. I found the ads about the internet to be so naive—like the internet as being a quirky, niche thing rather than the ubiquity that we negotiate every single day of our lives. The idea that the internet could be tailored to you as an alternative, funky person is so quaint and funny.



Matt Keegan, 1996 (Los Angeles: Inventory Press, 2020), 241. Chevron advertisement from *Time*, May 27, 1996. Courtesy of the artist and Inventory Press.



Matt Keegan, 1996 (Los Angeles: Inventory Press, 2020), 17. Kenneth Cole advertisement from *Details*, March 1996. Courtesy of the artist and Inventory Press.

MM: One thing I noticed you left out, in terms of key 1996 moments, was the release of Tori Amos's *Boys for Pele*.

MK: [Laughs.] I also could have gone into a Mariah Carey spiral. Music is definitely discussed in detail throughout the choral conversation and the interview between Alissa Bennett and Mel Ottenberg, but it's a topic I could have given more focused attention to. I was listening to so much music at that time.

MM: Who were you in 1996?

MK: I was a sophomore in college. That's also the year that I came out. Bill Clinton was the first president that I voted for when I was of voting age, in 1996. I thought about my own relationship to that year in regard to voting for Clinton and understanding, even at that time, that I was the target for his candidacy. His playing the saxophone on *The Arsenio Hall Show*—he was being imaged as a “cool” candidate. I understood that as being differentiated for me as a young consumer and voter versus... the absolute opposite of cool, which would be Bob Dole, his Republican opponent. Or the Independent candidate, Ross Perot, for that matter.

MM: With this book, you're interested in how artists participate in a broader cultural history. You don't seem as interested in historicizing the art world as an institution. What was your relationship to art at that time?

MK: Around 1996, I was introduced to Group Material and Fred Wilson's exhibition *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, and I was deeply impacted by the possibilities of collaboration and collective work and

institutional critique. Sophomore year was the first time I collaborated with a classmate. I did a project with my friend Denise Delgado where we got a grant from our school, Carnegie Mellon, to make an exhibition called *The Whole Art Show*. We put out a call to people within the city of Pittsburgh via ads on buses and in local newspapers, asking for residents to reach out to us if they considered themselves to be artists. We connected with visual artists, as well as people doing hair, working in textiles, bakers, and musicians. That was an important project for me. It ignited my interest in collaboration, but also this idea of storytelling, too—through public exchange. As a side note, Fred Wilson lectured at Carnegie Mellon the day before *The Whole Art Show* opened, and Denise and I nervously invited him to the opening and gave him my landline number to contact us. When we came back to my apartment, Fred had left a message and, although he was unable to attend the opening, we screamed as if a rock star had left a message on my answering machine. Total nerds!



Matt Keegan, *1996* (Los Angeles: Inventory Press, 2020), 236–37. Twenty-three people born in 1996. Courtesy of the artist and Inventory Press. Photos: Adam Pape.

MM: You mention the problem of intergenerational loss, and you present this book as a kind of gift or time capsule for younger generations. I'm curious about your own relationship to intergenerational loss as a queer artist.

MK: Intergenerational loss is a hard thing to articulate. My whole sexual life was defined by AIDS. I never understood sex without illness and death being interwoven. And a lot of queer people around my age understand the tremendous loss of the generation before ours. What immediately comes to mind is a kind of absence that is ill-defined, a mourning of specific people but also a mourning of a past that I only understand through oral history.

I recount in my introduction being shocked that smart and savvy students that I taught in recent years did not know about ACT UP. I was quite upset, and I said to my students, "I want you to understand that this kind of cultural erasure is a conservative project, that this isn't a fluke that you don't know this information. This is part of learning—paying attention to what is historicized and what is not. And deciding what role we want to play in countering that erasure."

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Megan Milks is the author of *Remember the Internet: Tori Amos Bootleg Webring*, forthcoming from Instar Books.

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ELECTORAL AESTHETICS

By Lucy Ives

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Matt Keegan's book *1996*, with interviews edited by Svetlana Kitto, Inventory Press.
COURTESY INVENTORY PRESS.

I remember some of 1996. That [election](https://www.artnews.com/t/election/) year nearly a quarter century ago is the subject and title of a new collection of essays—a time capsule, even—edited by artist [Matt Keegan](https://www.artnews.com/t/matt-keegan/) with interviews edited by writer and oral historian Svetlana Kitto. In 1996, I was either fifteen or sixteen years old, and I lived in New York City, where I took a bus or the subway to high school most days. I wore a lot of polyester clothes sourced from bins and bulging racks downtown. I carried a plastic wallet with cartoon frogs on it and lugged my textbooks around in a leather Village Tannery backpack that was way too small for the purpose and therefore had a weapon-like density. I read Hermann Hesse, Toni Morrison, Anaïs Nin, Gertrude Stein. I had never heard of David Foster Wallace, author of 1996's *Infinite Jest*. I was obsessed with platform shoes.

I still don't know where the determination to look and dress the way I looked and dressed in 1996 came from. It was, however, of such importance to me to wear the clothes I wore, and to use a specific eyeliner (white) and hair dye (blue-black), that over time I've wanted to decode this affinity. Since I thought less about the provenance of my thrift-shop finds than their colors and shapes, I have to believe I was after an image rather than a series of historical references—but what image was this, precisely? The decadence of the American nineties was a decadence of false minimalism, of up-cycling and appropriation, and of the dissimulation of enormous wealth and geopolitical power in textiles and imagery as “soft” as fake monkey fur or the underfed body of Kate Moss.

I couldn't vote in 1996, and to the extent I remember that year's election, it is for the pen that the seventy-three-year-old Republican nominee Bob Dole always clenched in his war-crippled right hand to mask its limited mobility. This, along with the candidate's susceptibility to memory lapses, was subtly exploited by the Clinton-Gore ticket. Most of what I recall from 1996, if this can be said to be a politics, has to do with messages related to sex. In spite of the country's having emerged from the puritanical Reagan-Bush years with Democratic triumph in 1992, sex, we were told, was unsafe for a number of reasons (shame, pregnancy, infection). I did not think of this as a sign of the times or evidence that the liberalism of the executive was frequently merely symbolic—saxophone stylings covering for continued dismantling of the social safety net and high rates of incarceration. Instead of thinking such things, I got up each morning and arrayed myself as if I were a visitor to the present from some other, possibly fictional era.



1996 *Time* magazine covers, from Matt Keegan's book *1996*.

Keegan writes in his introduction that the election of 2016 was an intellectually and politically transformative moment for him, motivating him to investigate “changes that the Democratic Party went through in the run-up to Bill Clinton's emergence as a presidential candidate in 1992.” The essays, interviews, archival images, magazine and newspaper clippings, and shots of art installations he and Kitto collect in *1996* focus on the experiences and points of view of artists who were either in or nearing their twenties in 1996, some voting for the first time in that year's election (including Becca Albee, Thomas Eggerer, Malik Gaines, Chitra Ganesh, Pearl C. Hsiung, Jennifer Moon, Seth Price, Alexando Segade, Elisabeth Subrin, Martine Syms, and Lincoln Tobier, among others). The anthology also features contributions from a number of other

disciplines, exploring the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act meant to reduce welfare; the AIDS crisis; racism and carceral politics during the 1990s; poet Eileen Myles's 1992 presidential campaign; American immigration policy; Israel, Palestine, and American foreign policy in the Middle East; and the climate crisis, among other touchstones, many of which significantly affect the present or remain with us in hardly altered forms. The book includes essays by such writers and scholars as José Esteban Muñoz ("Pedro Zamora's Real World of Counterpublicity: Performing an Ethics of the Self"), Yigal S. Nizri ("5756, Jerusalem"), and Mychal Denzel Smith ("A Lesson to Be Learned: On Clinton's Approval of the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1996 Welfare Reform Act"). The book's guiding animus is the notorious movement toward business interests and globalization effected by the Democratic Party in the platform of William Jefferson Clinton, (in)famously evidenced by the 1994 implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a Reagan initiative that was finally stewarded into existence by the forty-third chief executive. Keegan explains the relevance of his research to our present situation: "I would argue that this rightward move [of the Democratic party] is also foundational to Joe Biden becoming the Democratic presidential nominee in 2020."

Keegan has a point. As rhetoric in the lead-up to this month's contest has tended to emphasize the anti-democratic statements and policies of the incumbent, as well as the GOP's more general affinity for low turnout, restrictions on voting, creative districting, and indirect representation, *1996* reminds the reader of a longer history of norms, messages, exclusions, and coalitions—Republican, Democratic, and otherwise. One of the most interesting things about the writings and pictures the book assembles is that, although a great deal of this material originates in the year 1996, much of it does not. A number of essays are set several years before or a decade or so after the titular year, suggesting that even as we have a tendency to corral events into discrete dates and spans of time, our experience of them can be far more amorphous and ambiguous. In particular, essays by journalists Ahmad Ibsais and Jordan G. Teicher on global warming and the denial thereof show the ways in which political rhetoric and the news have wreaked havoc on our sense of time and causality. As Teicher notes in his concise history of climate-related misinformation from 1996 to the present, 1996 has the alarming distinction of being the last "cool" year in human history, with its average of 51.88 degrees Fahrenheit just shy of the twentieth century's overall average of 52.02. "Every year since," Teicher writes, "it's been hotter."



The anthology deploys ephemera very effectively, handily shocking the reader with the stupidity of mainstream ideology of the mid-1990s. A 1996 Kenneth Cole ad, touting the brand's next-level wingtips, proclaims: "The year is 2020. Computers can cook, all sex is safe and it's illegal to bear arms and bare feet. The future is what you make it." Such items—along with an image of Ivanka Trump as teen model or a fear-mongering depiction of the pledge of allegiance in Spanish and German from the xenophobic nonprofit "U.S. English," still operational today—provide some of the strongest tastes of the moment and foreshadow its lingering social and political effects.

The 1990s were the heyday of so-called scatter art. Although scatter art has perhaps not held up as well as other late-breaking takes on conceptualism (like those of Felix Gonzalez-Torres), some of its interest in the power of metonymy and everyday artifacts has clearly been absorbed—not uncritically—into *1996*'s modus operandi. Interspersed among the essays are images of pieces dated 1996 by Rachel Harrison, Roni Horn, Glenn Ligon, Cady Noland, Jack Pierson, Lari Pittman, Julia Scher, Wolfgang Tillmans, Kara Walker, Nari Ward, and Andrea Zittel, along with a still from 1995's *CREMASTER I* video by Matthew Barney—all of which appear without comment. However, there are no photographs of works by such artists as Mike Kelly, Karen Kilimnik, or Paul McCarthy, who are often understood as dominant artists of the time, and these omissions felt purposeful as well as refreshing. I did, however, sometimes wish that *1996* leaned a bit harder on Keegan and many contributors' area of expertise, i.e., visual art. It might have been nice to include at least one essay surveying the ubiquitous installation-based work of the 1990s or discussing the numerous artworks illustrated, particularly as the collection is well positioned to explore 1996's art in an original way, given its wide-ranging interest in policy and popular visual culture. That the book's ambition to focus on a rightward shift in American liberalism is not more fully explored via "high" art, as opposed to mass media, seems like something of a missed opportunity; or, perhaps the reader is simply meant to connect the dots. Yet, while juxtaposition can be a powerful aesthetic tool, it tends to produce suggestive resonances rather than clear argument, and the reader of *1996* might have benefited from a bit more lucidity with respect to the role of artworks in this historical moment. Given that Rudolph Giuliani serves as Trump's lawyer today, the book might have considered, for example, his failed attempt to censor Chris Ofili's 1996 glitter-and-elephant-dung-adorned painting *The Holy Virgin Mary* while it was displayed at the Brooklyn Museum in 1999. Although Giuliani was widely hailed as a hero for his actions around the World Trade Center's collapse shortly thereafter, his authoritarianism and disregard for the First Amendment had already been made clear when he sued and attempted to withdraw municipal funding from the Brooklyn Museum. It is interesting to consider how the art of 1996 might, for the perceptive reader, have decrypted the neoliberal politics of the time—de-normalizing them, as it were—even before these politics became more legible in hindsight.



Eileen Myles on November 6, 2016, at readings and performances in response to Zoe Leonard's "I want a president."
PHOTO: JULIETA CERVANTES.

Two of my favorite pieces in *1996* manage a difficult feat where nonfiction is concerned: that of being at once historically informative and intensely personal, showing how we may experience major historical changes as they are unfolding in the present. Debbie Nathan's essay recounts her time as the Texas chair of Eileen Myles's 1992 write-in presidential bid. As Nathan notes, Texas has gone Republican in every presidential race since the 1980s. Nathan, who would otherwise have voted Democrat, decided, after attending a poetry reading by Myles, "that if I was going to throw away the coin of my vote, I might as well toss it into a wishing well of hope." She joined Myles's campaign (its slogan: "Veto the mainstream! Stay outside! Vote for Eileen Myles"). She quickly discovered that she was too late to submit signatures necessary to get Myles on the ballot. Undeterred by this or her friends' dismay at her enthusiasm for an independent candidate, Nathan, a journalist and immigrants' rights advocate, joined the poet-candidate to paint a giant WRITE IN MYLES on a concrete embankment of the Rio Grande in El Paso. But this is only the beginning of Nathan's account. She details the Democrats' ramping up of policing after Clinton's first success: a 1993 op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* by Democratic California senator Dianne Feinstein calling for tougher measures on immigration, as well as Biden's 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, signed by Bernie Sanders, among others. By the time 1996 rolled around, Clinton's position on immigration was hardly distinct from that of his Republican opponent.



A Chevron ad published in *Time* on May 27, 1996, from Matt Keegan's book *1996*.

Michael Bullock's "Cruising Diary: 1991–2001," meanwhile, is a memoir of navigating the early internet's male-seeking-male offerings. Bullock recounts his teenaged attempts at cruising and use of a telephone chat line advertised in a newspaper (the source of one very creepy encounter), bringing the reader along as he begins to experiment with web-based communications and, in the process, to reckon with desire, risk, and safer sex. In 1996 there were only limited and somewhat awkward options via real-time chat rooms, but by the early 2000s Craigslist's personals section had blossomed. Encounters with one Craigslist poster, "ZebraShades," demonstrate to Bullock the power of the anonymous message board to facilitate new kinds of connection, along with the fulfillment of very particular erotic needs. As he writes, "Digital space allowed a generation of men to grow together, enabling us to each fearlessly seek out our own ZebraShades."

The verb "to normalize" has become a favorite shorthand in the present, yet *1996* calls our attention to a much longer series of successful and politically devastating normalizations, which we would do well not to ignore or forget. It is a kind of art to establish familiarity and normalcy where, in truth, none can or should inhere. In this sense, as we know, artists are far from the only ones who are creative in their jobs; marketers and political strategists are creative, too. The Jamaican-American artist Dave McKenzie, writing in a new essay on his 2004 performance *We Shall Overcome*, makes the following observation:

I know the internet and social media supposedly explain Trump, but weirdly enough—and this is why I think of him as the television president—I wonder about there being some sort of delay. At some point, we'll have a YouTube star who's president, but maybe not for another fifty years or something. But I'm wondering how each Clinton—from Clinton to Clinton—each moment or figure exposes something in the very recent past of media, of culture. They're dragging with them some idea from the generation just prior.

If McKenzie is correct, we should be thinking about 1996 today because it is this moment's media ecosystem and its political events that are likely to affect if not determine the present. I'm not sure what it might mean to be governed by a YouTube president, to extend McKenzie's metaphor, but it does seem clear that four more years of "the television president" would be an instance of the past not merely influencing the present but overwhelming and, in some sense, displacing it. Overall, *1996* is an informative and, in the end, hopeful collection, demonstrating that we can learn a great deal from recent history, even as the time remaining to apply these urgent lessons grows increasingly short.

De volta aos anos 1990 com Matt Keegan

Umbigo Magazine, April 27, 2020

Dasha Birukova

Apoie a edição cultural independente



Matt Keegan, "Recycle", 2020. © Bruno Lopes

ARTE & CULTURA

De volta aos anos 1990 com Matt Keegan

 Dasha Birukova

No início de março, a galeria [Pedro Cera](#) abriu uma exposição individual com as mais recentes obras de [Matt Keegan](#), intitulada *Recycle*. Keegan cresceu nos anos 80 e 90, nos Estados Unidos, e explora o impacto sociopolítico e dos meios de comunicação massificados dessas décadas no seu país. *Recycle* apresenta novos trabalhos em vídeo, fotografia e colagem feitos a partir de material já existente produzido em massa, e um arquivo pessoal de imagens da sua mãe, que esta havia

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preparado para as suas aulas de inglês. Com uma linguagem publicitária que serve de base às suas obras, o artista experimenta a descontextualização e inversão do imaginário, num contraponto à sociedade capitalista.

Dasha Birukova – Lisboa é uma cidade marcada pela imigração, especialmente nos últimos anos. A sua exposição individual na Galeria Pedro Cera explora estas questões? Como construiu esta exposição e trabalhou com o contexto português em particular?

Matt Keegan – Fiz os meus quatro vídeos para uma exposição individual que tive no ano passado, na Galeria Altman Siegel, em São Francisco. Quando a minha mãe começou a ensinar inglês como segunda língua (ESL), trabalhou com adolescentes e adultos no ensino público, predominantemente da América Central e do México. É a mesma população que Trump criminalizou por tentar entrar nos EUA. Embora trabalhe com os flashcards da ESL da minha mãe desde 2010, a resposta atual a essas populações imigrantes adquiriu uma nova relevância. Não tinha Portugal em mente ao fazer este trabalho, mas, como a sua pergunta refere, há uma crise global relacionada com os imigrantes deslocados e refugiados. Independentemente de estarmos nos EUA ou em Portugal, o inglês é a língua franca para o comércio (artístico ou não), por isso o conteúdo ESL tem relevância. Trabalho também com imagens comerciais feitas nos EUA, e essas fotos de arquivo já circularam provavelmente no estrangeiro, e são legítimas num contexto internacional.

DB – Pode contar-nos mais sobre as histórias por trás desses vídeos? E porque decidiu animar as imagens estáticas?

MK – Escolhi quatro flashcards para animar a partir de um conjunto de 400 cartas com frente e verso. Com base no tipo de imagens que a minha mãe selecionou, tentei abordar o que me pareceu serem categorias da coleção dela. Uma natureza morta: com 7.5 Litros de Leite. Publicidade em catálogo: Preparado para trabalhar. Representações da diversidade étnica/racial: Companheiros de Viagem. E o auto/biográfico: Licenciado. O processo de animação destas quatro cartas foi bastante intuitivo – obedeci àquilo que a imagem exigia. Tentei ativar o que já estava representado na imagem estática, com exceção da ‘Licenciado’. Para este vídeo, escrevi o breve roteiro baseado num intercâmbio real que tive com minha avó materna, quando me formei na faculdade.

Reanimar uma imagem estática é uma reflexão sobre o período temporal que contém essa mesma imagem, conferindo-lhe vida através de um olhar contemporâneo. Por exemplo, o vídeo do metro foi capa da revista New York Time, e tive interesse na linguagem que usada para enquadrar diferentes populações, e o quão extremamente datada parece nos dias de hoje. É interessante que estivesse datada na altura em que começavam a brotar as políticas de identidade. Os meados dos anos noventa estão agora a começar a ser debatidos. Cada vídeo refere essa estética particular. Ao usar as imagens de arquivo, tão familiares no contexto norte-americano, deixaram de ser invisíveis, sem nunca se apresentarem claramente. A minha ideia era trabalhar com o processo que estas conseguissem evocar.

DB – A cultura visual massificada dos anos 90 é capaz de evocar sentimentos ou uma

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aura nostálgica – contudo, a sua forma de alienar essa visualidade cria uma dissonância que se situa algures entre o sarcasmo e o sentimento. Qual é a sua visão sobre a estética dos seus vídeos? E como é que os anos 90 influenciaram a sua prática artística?

MK – Os flashcards foram feitos principalmente entre 1987/88 e o final dos anos 90. São uma cápsula do tempo dos desejos e ambições da classe média dos anos 90.

Estou interessado neste período, pois, do fim da presidência Reagan até aos dois mandatos de Bill Clinton, a classe média encolheu significativamente nos EUA. Embora referida frequentemente pelos políticos, essa demografia não existe em números (ou na viabilidade financeira) relevantes, tal como a minha mãe havia lecionado no curso de ESL.

Estou mais interessado no humor do que no sarcasmo ao refazer essas imagens comercialmente lubrificadas. Todos os flashcards que seleccionei têm imagens fixas amadurecidas com diferentes registos absurdistas. Espero melhorar esse aspeto e seguir uma direção engraçada, desconfortável ou inquietante. O ideal é que a resposta seja mais do que um risinho.

Os anos 90 têm uma influência significativa na minha prática artística e em mim como pessoa. Fui para a faculdade em 1994. Fiz parte dos primeiros anos dos estudos culturais e de género. Conheci o trabalho de artistas como Fred Wilson, coletivos como o Group Material, e percebi que a arte e a cultura mais abrangentes, o enquadramento museológico, etc., estavam disponíveis para mim enquanto artista.

DB – Falemos das colagens: o que o atrai nesta técnica? Que camada crítica poderíamos encontrar na coleção de cupões de desconto?

MK – Comecei a fazer colagens baseadas em fotos ainda nos tempos da minha pós-graduação e continuo até hoje. As minhas colagens anteriores consistiam em cortar e colar fotografias do meu arquivo pessoal. Locais, pessoas e momentos uniram-se em arranjos formais. Tendo em conta a forma como a minha mãe fazia os seus flashcards com material impresso que chegava à nossa casa (através de catálogos gratuitos), tenho interesse no marcador temporal dos preços. Estão próximos do momento atual, pois os vários itens eram mais baratos nos anos 90 do que são hoje. Vejo também uma beleza particular na forma como a publicidade nos supermercados era feita e com os cupões eram fotografados. Nas minhas colagens, tentei criar um campo para apresentar estes marcadores.

DB – A sua série *Clockwise* deu corpo à sua abordagem típica, que brinca com os materiais e as formas. Poderia falar-nos mais sobre o processo de cortar as capas das revistas noticiais para transformá-las em objetos?

MK – Aqueles três números da revista Time (todos de 1996) tinham anúncios a leite que a minha mãe cortou para fazer o seu flashcard. Achei interessante as três capas terem relevância no momento atual: A Rússia em ano eleitoral, assim como a própria eleição de Ieltsin (há também uma história de capa da Time sobre a intervenção americana na eleição de Ieltsin), com as mulheres a serem uma importante demografia para os candidatos presidenciais americanos (Trump conseguiu assegurar uma grande percentagem de eleitoras brancas em 2016), e o cientista Dr. Ho teve um

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impacto significativo com a sua investigação durante a crise da SIDA.

Os trabalhos de *Clockwork* baseiam-se no meu interesse pela transição da forma bidimensional para a tridimensional. É como um padrão para um vestido ou camisola, compreendendo que o padrão liso poderia uma peça de vestuário dimensional. É uma tradução tátil muito específica, onde as ideias são transportadas para o material.

DB - Sente uma diferença entre o mundo artístico norte-americano e europeu? Como é ser um artista americano hoje em dia?

MK - Nunca vivi na Europa e, embora tenha lá exposto, não o fiz de forma exaustiva. Os EUA são muito grandes. Posso falar enquanto artista que vive em Brooklyn, Nova Iorque. Não é fácil. Tenho a sorte de ensinar, de proporcionar um escape para um tipo diferente de diálogo permanente. Mas não sei o que significa a verdadeira América. Especialmente agora, quando a maioria dos republicanos está feliz com Trump, 40% dos EUA também estão felizes com ele. Ao viver no cosmopolitismo da costa, racial e sexualmente diversificado, não tenho qualquer relação com a América como um todo. Acho que estou interessado nos estereótipos gerais sobre os EUA, pois é impossível fugir deles. Especialmente por ter crescido na cidade durante os anos 80, onde os meios de comunicação que eu consumia, por exemplo, transmitiam o projeto de democracia. Ouvi sempre dizer que “a Rússia é um inimigo”, ou “a democracia vencerá”. Era tão banal quanto o Rocky ou o Rambo. É simplesmente impossível retirar isso da minha identidade. Poderia eu ser outra coisa que não um artista americano? Mas nunca me senti tão confuso com o representante escolhido pela população. É um momento estranho para todos, especialmente agora!

Matt Keegan: Recycle
Contemporânea, Ed. 01-02-03, 2020
Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva

Matt Keegan: *Recycle*



— por Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva

As imagens falam mais alto do que as palavras, mas o
que dizem?

Foi uma semana depois de Matt Keegan ter inaugurado a sua exposição individual em Lisboa, *Recycle*, na Galeria Pedro Cera, a 6 de Março, que respondeu às minhas perguntas por e-mail, a partir da sua casa em Nova Iorque.

“Para o trabalho incluído em “Recycle”, interessa-me menos falar da minha experiência pessoal, e mais no modo como as imagens da cultura popular foram usadas pela minha mãe para ensinar inglês. Os seus mais de 400 cartões de aprendizagem apresentam imagens que funcionam como um retrato de arquivo de uma classe média americana aspiracional nos anos 1990. Por sinal, foi nesta altura que a classe média começou a enfraquecer. Em termos artísticos, estou interessado na relação desta coleção com a Pictures Generation. A minha mãe não é artista, e apesar das várias decisões criativas envolvidas na criação dos seus cartões, eles são ferramentas empáticas para o ensino.”

Infelizmente, a exposição não ficaria aberta por muito tempo, porque pouco depois foi declarado o estado de emergência pelo governo português em resposta à propagação da Covid-19. Só agora é que reabriu, e isto graças à extensão da exposição, até ao final de Maio. Na exposição encontramos doze trabalhos feitos entre 2007 e 2020, incluindo vídeo, colagens em papel com guache e tinta vinílica, impressão sobre alumínio, e fotografias emolduradas. Apesar da brancura plana da galeria e da qualidade de certo modo bidimensional dos trabalhos, as obras são bastante invasivas, com cores intensas e uma forte vibração. Grelhas de elementos visuais competem através da cor e de indicações visuais, não apenas esteticamente, parecendo transportar informação, como se diferentes conjuntos de puzzles estivessem misturados. A mais vibrante, uma série de quatro colagens que compõem *Circulatory* (Meat, Quilt, Surplus, Head to Toe, todas de 2019), consistindo cada uma de uma grelha de recortes de material publicitário, do género que recebemos na caixa do correio das mercearias mais próximas com todas as promoções e preços especiais. Os itens contrastam com os fundos coloridos brilhantes, cor-de-rosa, verde, amarelo.

Keegan diz que escolhe o seu *medium* — colagem, impressão sobre alumínio cortado e dobrado, escultura e vídeo — de forma intuitiva.

Aparentemente estas colagens foram as mais rápidas de se fazer, ao passo que os vídeos e os trabalhos em alumínio (ver abaixo) exigiram um maior planeamento e tempo para desenvolver.

Naquele email, Keegan referia-se ao conjunto original de cartões ESL (Inglês como segunda língua) feitos pela sua mãe para ensinar aulas de ESL nocturnas em Long Island, Nova Iorque, desde o início da década de 1990 até ao princípio dos anos 2000. Keegan encontrou mais de 400 cartões num armário na casa da sua mãe. Ela criara os cartões recortando imagens de revistas e de outros materiais impressos de grande circulação, incluindo publicidade. Como um professor desenvolto faria, ela usou o que tinha disponível, mas, ao mesmo tempo, cristalizou visualmente as representações de coisas e pessoas dos media dos anos 90, acrescentando-lhes as suas escolhas subjectivas ao associar uma imagem encontrada a uma palavra do programa curricular. Nem todas as associações são directamente ilustrativas, algumas talvez exijam mais subjectividade por parte do aluno, o que não deixa de ser uma experiência normal para qualquer pessoa que já tenha, num dado momento da sua vida, aprendido uma língua estrangeira. Uma experiência, no entanto, ainda mais memorável para quem o tenha feito enquanto imigrante no começo de uma nova vida — era esse exactamente o público da mãe de Keegan. Keegan mencionou também o grupo *Pictures Generation*, aludindo assim, por um lado, a uma prática artística que revela a fabricação inerente a imagens *mass media* (e como contêm estereótipos ou agendas particulares), e, por outro, o prescindir da autoria pelo artista, encorajando talvez ainda mais uma cadeia de apropriações.

Parte da pesquisa de Keegan consiste em vasculhar por imagens na internet. Disse que comprava revistas desde 1996 no eBay (um ano que lhe interessa particularmente) quando encontrou o anúncio original ao leite que a sua mãe usava para fazer um dos seus cartões. *2 Gallons of milk* (2019) é um pequeno vídeo que apresenta dois garrações com tampas azuis e cheios de leite sobre uma mesa e ao lado de alguns tomate-cereja. Sobre uma parede em tons de azul suave projecta-se a luz de uma janela. No espaço da galeria, o leite torna-se o sujeito de uma sensual natureza-morta em vídeo, com gotas de condensação que se formam nos garrações e que devolvem os garrações de leite às suas vidas passadas, uma enquanto auxílio visual para aprender inglês americano, a outra como o sujeito de um anúncio para o American Plastic Council. Na exposição, três outros vídeos tiveram como ponto de partida os cartões encontrados de Inglês como Segunda Língua (todos de 2019, de 4,5 cm de comprimento), e foram escolhidos por Keegan porque pertencem a diferentes categorias do conjunto de cartões (embora essas categorias, como “auto/biografia”, “diversidade” ou “natureza morta”, pareçam ter uma classificação própria). À entrada da galeria, *Ready for Work* é um vídeo que recebe os visitantes com um jovem empresário americano, bem vestido, a calçar um par de meias. Na parede do fundo da galeria está “College Graduate”, um vídeo que retrata uma avó latina e a sua neta, que parece ter acabado de se formar, e que inclui um bolo. Em *Fellow Travelers*, a câmara de Keegan retrata, um a um, um grupo heterogéneo de passageiros do metro de Nova Iorque e termina com uma lista escrita de rótulos. Arquetípicos, eles são *Do-Good Bluebloods* (deve ser aquela senhora branca burguesa,

elegante e austera) ou *Indian Hipsters* (deve ser o que usa um sari). Mas as descrições mais crípticas da lista, aquelas que não se baseiam completamente na etnia ou na aparência, tais como “Lingering Liberals” ou *Crash-Course Americans*, fazem-nos questionar estas associações baseadas em clichés. *Touché*, embora resumir os EUA (ou mesmo Nova Iorque) a leite, Wall Street, Metro e emigrantes latinos pareça um bom início de descrição, um lugar e a sua cultura associada têm certamente mais camadas, são mais heterogêneos e feitos de muitas excepções.

“Tenho trabalhado de um modo interdisciplinar desde os meus primeiros anos de faculdade”, diz Keegan.

Baseado em Brooklyn, trabalha não apenas como artista, fazendo escultura e instalação multimédia, fotografia, vídeo e trabalhos baseados em texto, como também escreve e edita. Dois dos seus projectos editoriais são == (igual, igual), um projecto curatorial impresso, e North Drive Press (<http://www.northdrivepress.com/>) (uma publicação anual fundada em conjunto com a sua amiga de infância Lizzy Lee) também com múltiplos, entrevistas e textos, e de inspiração colaborativa. As suas actividades variadas, frequentemente de natureza colaborativa — incluindo membros da família, mãe, pai, sobrinho... — e com ligações directas ao seu meio envolvente, fazem de Keegan um habitante da cidade e membro participante de comunidades ao seu redor, e, por extensão, um novo iorquino empenhado. Curiosamente, para a sua primeira exposição em Lisboa na Galeria Pedro Cera em 2013, envolveu Helena Cardoso, a mãe da artista e amiga Ana Cardoso, que lhe ofereceu a oportunidade de criar uma relação específica com Lisboa:

“Estava especialmente interessado na carreira da Helena na TAP (viajando entre Lisboa e Nova Iorque, entre outros locais), e no seu mais recente trabalho enquanto tradutora.”

Construindo uma espécie de ponte, sublinha o facto de que a estratégia artística de Keegan inclui a ligação a um local e o envolvimento de pessoas próximas — e, claro, palavras. Desta vez, embora a exposição seja uma selecção de vários dos seus projectos, em vez de um pacote curatorialmente coeso que facilite a leitura, Keegan consegue partilhar com o público de Lisboa algo de casa, a partir da sua pesquisa contínua e das suas experimentações.

Três trabalhos expostos juntos enquanto uma série (todos são impressões sobre alumínio recortado, e datam de 2020 mas referem-se ao ano de 1996 — ano em que Clinton venceu as eleições presidenciais americanas — têm por título

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Clockwise) representam artigos (frente e verso) da revista semanal nova-iorquina *Time*. *Clockwise* (5/27/96) corresponde ao número de 27 de Maio de 1996. A capa anuncia uma reportagem especial sobre as próximas eleições russas (Boris Yeltsin viria a tornar-se presidente em Julho). A contracapa é um anúncio do American Plastic Council (sabem, *aqueles* garrações de leite que mencionei antes). *Clockwise* (10/14/96) e *Clockwise* (12/30/96), respectivamente, dão destaque às mães trabalhadoras americanas pelo seu papel crucial nas seguintes eleições americanas da altura, e o investigador na área da SIDA, Dr. David Ho, como o homem do ano da *Time* num número duplo especial. Sobre este último, por coincidência, encontrei esta citação enquanto fazia pesquisa para este artigo pelo então editor da *Time*, Philip Elmer-De Witt: “Algumas épocas são definidas pelas suas epidemias”. Ho continuaria a ser a única pessoa da medicina a merecer este reconhecimento até 2014, quando a revista distinguiu os Combatentes do Ébola (veremos quem escolhem este ano). Keegan não tinha forma de saber sobre a propagação súbita de Covid-19, mas tal como o título da sua exposição é *Recycle*, o velho e o novo seguem-se continuamente um ao outro. A linguagem evolui, mas alguns estereótipos e ideias permanecem, embora por vezes seja útil desmontá-los ao expor as suas origens. Keegan aviva a nossa consciência para as muitas ramificações possíveis que as imagens e as palavras têm, e, considerando o nosso mundo saturado de informação, parece ser uma boa competência a aperfeiçoar.

Matt Keegan (<https://mattkeegan.info/>)

Galeria Pedro Cera (<https://www.pedrocera.com/exhibitions/matt-keegan-recycle/>)

Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva é uma autora com experiência em relações internacionais e estratégia. Viveu na Ásia durante 15 anos. Actualmente trabalha e vive entre Lisboa e Hong Kong. É co-fundadora e editora-chefe da revista de arte Pipeline, com sede em Hong Kong (impressão 2011-2016). Contribui, regularmente, para várias publicações na Ásia, Europa e EUA, como Artforum, Frieze e Hyperallergic.

Tradução do inglês por Gonçalo Gama Pinto.

The New York Times

11 Outdoor Installations to See in New York This Summer

From the South Bronx to Governors Island and beyond, artworks are popping up all over the city. Here's a guide to what's happening.

By Melissa Smith

June 21, 2019

Across the city this summer, works that artists conceived for public spaces are turning up — like “Estructuras Monumentales,” five large-scale sculptures that Carmen Herrera started making in the 1960s that will be on view at City Hall Park from July 11 through Nov. 8. Other artists, like Leonardo Drew, have had to do more fine-tuning. Mr. Drew recently crossed over into public art with “City in the Grass,” an installation he designed (and redesigned) with Madison Square Park in mind.

A Closer Look at ‘City in the Grass’

Leonardo Drew’s installation opened June 3.



Leonardo Drew Rides His Magic Carpet to a New Field

The sculptor's first outdoor work in Madison Square Park is a cityscape created from wood, aluminum and colored sand.

May 30, 2019

With summer officially here, there is even more art to come: At MoMA PS1, visitors will soon find a 40-by-90-foot panoramic “jungle” suspended over its courtyard, and in August, the photographer Elle Pérez will plaster images of diverse city communities on 100 city bus shelters. Here are 11 installations that demonstrate just what is possible when artists embrace the outdoors.

FORT GREENE PARK, BROOKLYN

Tanda Francis

Sometimes the site of an artist's work really amplifies the work itself. This is especially true of Tanda Francis's “Adorn Me.” Fort Greene Park is the socioeconomic and racial dividing line of its neighborhood, with one side reflecting whiteness and affluence far more than the other. Ms. Francis installed her bust featuring three adjoining African faces where it would “speak directly to the African-American community, which often goes unrepresented in public art,” she wrote on her website. Impossible to miss at the corner of Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park, Ms. Francis's piece is partially covered in African tribal markings, and its three sets of braids rise into a chandelier-like headdress. *Through July 19.*

COURT SQUARE PARK, QUEENS

Matt Keegan

Marketing signs for newly-built apartment buildings are everywhere around Court Square Park in Long Island City, along with construction cranes and scaffolding, signaling that more units are on the way. Amid all this is Matt Keegan's “what was & what is.” An off-site installation for the SculptureCenter, it consists of a rectangular glass box with one mirrored side. A horizontal scroll reads, “For a long time this neighborhood was about what will be, and now I think it's about what is.” The quotation, from a developer, appeared in a 2017 New York Times article about the area's “skyward” development, and exemplifies how real estate professionals sometimes see the city as being in service to new development. *Through Aug. 18.*

DORIS C. FREEDMAN PLAZA, MANHATTAN

Mark Manders



Mark Manders's "Tilted Head" at the southeast edge of Central Park. George Etheredge for The New York Times

This year, the Dutch sculptor Mark Manders has taken over the Public Art Fund's inaugural outdoor exhibition site, Doris C. Freedman Plaza at the southeast edge of Central Park. Titled "Tilted Head," his piece is just that: a large head resting on its side. Surface cracks and depressions suggest it is made of clay when, in fact, it's cast bronze. "All my works look like somebody worked on it and just left," Mr. Manders said in a video about his process. "Tilted Head" resembles a massive, abandoned model that people could consider a stand-in for the real thing. *Through Sept. 1 at 60th Street and Fifth Avenue.*

HIGH LINE, MANHATTAN

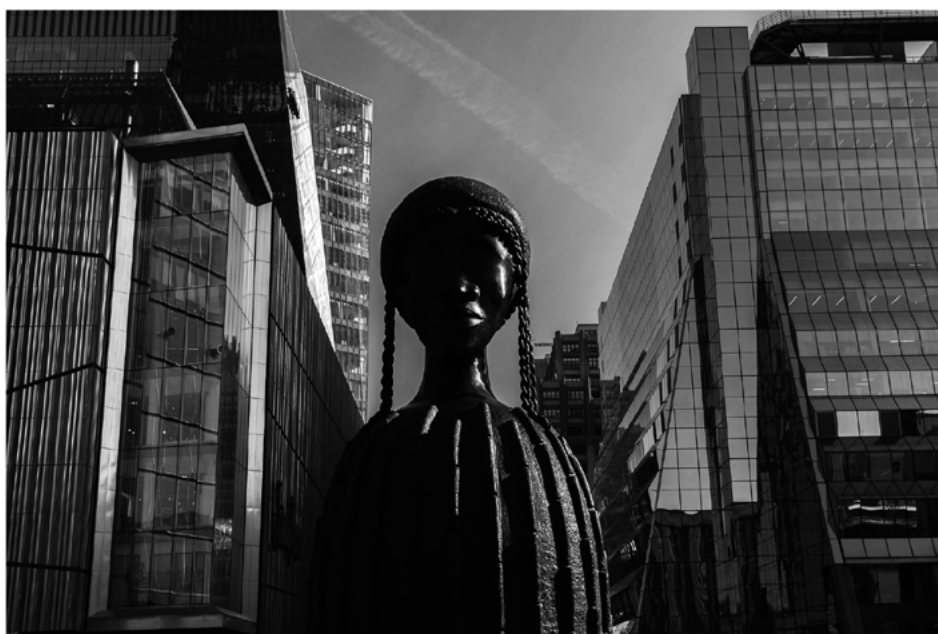
'En Plein Air' by Various Artists

On the High Line, "En Plein Air" (the French phrase for "in the open air") enlists eight artists to reconsider the tradition of outdoor painting. In "Five Conversations," for example, the recent Turner Prize winner Lubaina Himid has painted portraits of

fashionable black women on five reclaimed wooden doors — the old, paneled kind — adding subtle dimensions to each of them. Ms. Himid also integrated the doors' accessories into her “canvases.” A round door knocker doubles as a hoop earring, a doorknob as a ring. Ms. Himid not only reimagines the process of “en plein air” painting, but also the subjects typically depicted within them. *Through March 2020.*

HIGH LINE, MANHATTAN

Simone Leigh



Simone Leigh's “Brick House,” now at the High Line. Jeenah Moon for *The New York Times*

To get a look at Simone Leigh's sculptural work, you could visit her exhibition, “Loophole of Retreat,” at the Guggenheim, or wander over to the Spur, the newest addition to the High Line. Although, to say that someone must be *on* the High Line to get a glimpse is a bit misleading. Traveling north on 10th Avenue toward 30th Street, you'd have to be daydreaming not to spot Ms. Leigh's “Brick House,” a 16-foot bust of a black woman with cornrow braids and a torso resembling a type of African clay house. Created as the inaugural commission for the High Line Plinth, a focal point of the Spur, the work is distinguished by its imposing height. But if you mosey up to the Spur itself, you'll notice the figure's blotted-out eyes, which more effectively position her as someone to be seen, not simply looked at. *Through Sept. 2020.*

GREENWICH VILLAGE, MANHATTAN

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

For Pride Month, the Public Art Fund has reinstalled a billboard that the conceptual artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres first presented at this exact location in 1989, nearly seven years before his death from complications related to AIDS. One of his “date pieces,” “Untitled” lists quintessential moments in the fight for gay rights in stark white print against a black background. Torres tried to create “an architectural sign of being, a monument for a community that has been ‘historically invisible,’” he once said. *Through June 30 at Christopher Street and Sixth Avenue in Greenwich Village.*

MARCUS GARVEY PARK, MANHATTAN

José Carlos Casado, Kim Dacres and Daniel A. Matthews

For a commission organized by the Public Art Initiative of the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance, José Carlos Casado references black female subjectivity in “I Don’t Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Ah Me ...” The work, situated near Madison Avenue and 123rd Street in Harlem, contextualizes how Mr. Casado felt after reading Maya Angelou’s seminal memoir “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.” Working with archival-printed aluminum pieces, he made an amorphous, multicolored tower (one that becomes interactive with an augmented-reality app), and placed it within a 14-foot purple cage that, incidentally, wild birds use as a temporary perch. On the southern end of the park, Kim Dacres and Daniel A. Matthews have installed a black female bust, “Peaceful Perch,” near 120th Street and Fifth Avenue. Repurposing motorcycle tires, Ms. Dacres contorted this dark, textured material, contouring the figure from its folds and protrusions. Mr. Matthews helped fabricate the base, and situate it on the curved lawn above the park’s main path. *Through Sept. 30.*

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The New York Times, June 21, 2019

Melissa Smith

GOVERNORS ISLAND

Shantell Martin



Shantell Martin's "Church" on Governors Island. George Etheredge for The New York Times

Shantell Martin doesn't have many rules for where her work goes. From the New York City Ballet's home theater last winter to a Catholic Church on Governors Island this summer, Ms. Martin's drawings have decorated some unusual places. Her line drawings feature cartoonlike faces and stick figures, almost always in black ink on a white background. "Church," the mural Ms. Martin drew on Our Lady of the Sea, a deconsecrated church built in 1942, encourages viewers to re-engage with this disused building. *Through Oct. 31.*

11 Outdoor Installations to See in New York This Summer

The New York Times, June 21, 2019

Melissa Smith

RIVERSIDE PARK SOUTH, MANHATTAN

Sarah E. Brook



“Viewfinding” in Riverside Park South in Manhattan.

George Etheredge for The New York Times

Sarah E. Brook wants people to feel a little disoriented when they’re looking at “Viewfinding,” her sculpture installation in Riverside Park South. Ms. Brook positioned five tall wooden structures in a row, each containing thin, brightly-colored panels that reflect the light — most dramatically at sunrise and sunset. For the piece, Ms. Brook had an open call for queer-identified poets. Her final selections — 26 in all — are engraved on acrylic plates that have been neatly placed on a bench at the structure’s base. The engravings are meant to amplify queer voices and, paired with the vertical installation, explore “how vastness can dismantle limiting narratives of being,” she wrote on her website. (On Saturday, June 22, the artist will host a multidisciplinary queer arts festival called *Alternative Pride* at “Viewfinding.”) *Through Aug. 22 at 67th Street.*

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The New York Times, June 21, 2019

Melissa Smith

SOUTH BRONX

John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres

The plot at the corner of Intervale Avenue and Kelly Street in the South Bronx has been many things over the years. In 1982, when John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres scaled its adjacent wall to mount “Banana Kelly Double Dutch” — molds of four local girls in a tableau of the game — it was a small park. Mr. Ahearn and Mr. Torres have restored and reinstalled the work twice in the intervening years, first in 1986 and then in 2017, when Mr. Ahearn and Mr. Torres saw an opportunity to freshen it up after hearing the site was set for redevelopment. Last summer the girls, glistening like new, were returned to their original home — which now overlooks the parking lot of a nursing home. *Open indefinitely.*

Matt Keegan, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA
Frieze, June-July-August, 2019
Fanny Singer

MATT KEEGAN Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA

The aseptic white cube is a canny fit for Matt Keegan's newest body of work. Mining an archive of educational tools used in the instruction of language, for his fourth solo exhibition at Altman-Siegel Gallery, Keegan has created a series of sculptures, photographs and videos designed to return the viewer to a juvenile frame of mind. Remember the feeling of fiddling with an array of uncomplicated children's toys in a dentist's waiting room, queasily anticipating the hygienist calling your name? The institutional whitewash, the fluorescent lighting play to this feeling of being held, observed, in uncomfortable, dumb limbo, as you try to work out the meanings of inscrutable shapes (Keegan's 'Cutouts', a series begun in 2014, are undeniably Rorschachian), or struggle to decipher the systems that underlie a series of didactic compositions (the large, wall-mounted 'Have You Seen My Language?', 2016/19, comprises 50 C-prints matching mass-produced ESL [English as a Second Language] flashcards to objects in the artist's home). The feeling is intensified by the presence of an iterative sculpture, *Puppy Puzzle* (2019), in which a different piece of an enlarged puzzle is absent in each of three versions. Keegan sourced the original puzzle depicted on the flashcard for the word 'puzzle' from the set used in 'Have You Seen My Language?' but, rather than deploy it in the photographic series, gave it blown-up, embodied form.

The gesture here – the scaled, perfect enlargement – has been a feature of Keegan's practice for a number of years and is the dominant formal conceit behind the 'Cutouts': a group of symmetrical, wall-mounted, powder-coated steel



mother, an ESL teacher; each 1:08-minute long video responds to one of these cards. Cobbled together from 1990s-era mass-market print media, his mother's cards reflected the economic – and by extension aesthetic – values of the Clinton years (hammering home the association: Keegan's inclusion of a plaster cast of a Bill Clinton caricature mask). The videos – all 2019 – are: *Ready for Work*, a Teutonic male model dressing for Wall Street; *Fellow Travelers*, a group of New York City subway riders assigned typological epithets ('Chinatown Homies', 'Indian Hipsters', 'Do-Good Bluebloods', etc.); *2 Gallons of Milk*, two fridge-cold gallons of milk beading with sweat; and *College Graduate*, in which a young Latina speaks in sub-titled Spanish to her *abuela* at a party thrown in honour of her having

Matt Keegan, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA

Frieze, June-July-August, 2019

Fanny Singer

forms based on original hand-cut paper templates. These pieces do not feel incongruent within the context of Keegan's tongue-in-cheek pedagogical playhouse; they bear a resemblance to kindergarten-classroom paper snowflakes. Though their relationship to language and words is tenuous, they are nonetheless elegant, beautiful objects. A concurrent exhibition at Potts, Los Angeles, pairs Keegan's 'Cutouts (C is for Corita)' (2018), a slew of silkscreened paper cutouts with Corita Kent's *International Signal Code Alphabet* (1968), a A-Z, 26-serigraph series in which she whimsically reconstructed the International Code of Signals. There, in affective dialogue with Kent's works, Keegan's intimately scaled cutouts assume a more nuanced, meaningful relationship to their referents.

Since 2010, Keegan has referred to a deck of amateur flashcards made by his

'worked her ass on'. (The English language idiomatic slippage cues the granddaughter's 'haha' correction 'No, it's work your ass off, abuela.')

The videos, despite their identical length, do not totally cohere as a group. Then again, close examination of 'Have You Seen My Language?' yields similar inconsistencies: there is no one system at work in the placement of the ESL flashcards – sometimes the relationship is 1:1 (a card of a toilet affixed to a toilet); sometimes formal (a card of a configuration of blocks held before a similarly shaped city skyline); sometimes associative (a card of a pair of glasses placed on a bedside table). Whether this dissonance is intentionally antic is unclear; Keegan walks a fine line between nostalgic irreverence and wry critique of a system designed to educate, though vulnerable to satire.

Fanny Singer

Crystal Balls, Red Light Spectacle and a Pop Art Nun: the Best Shows in Los Angeles

Frieze, February 14, 2019

Simone Krug

Frieze

Critics' Guides 7

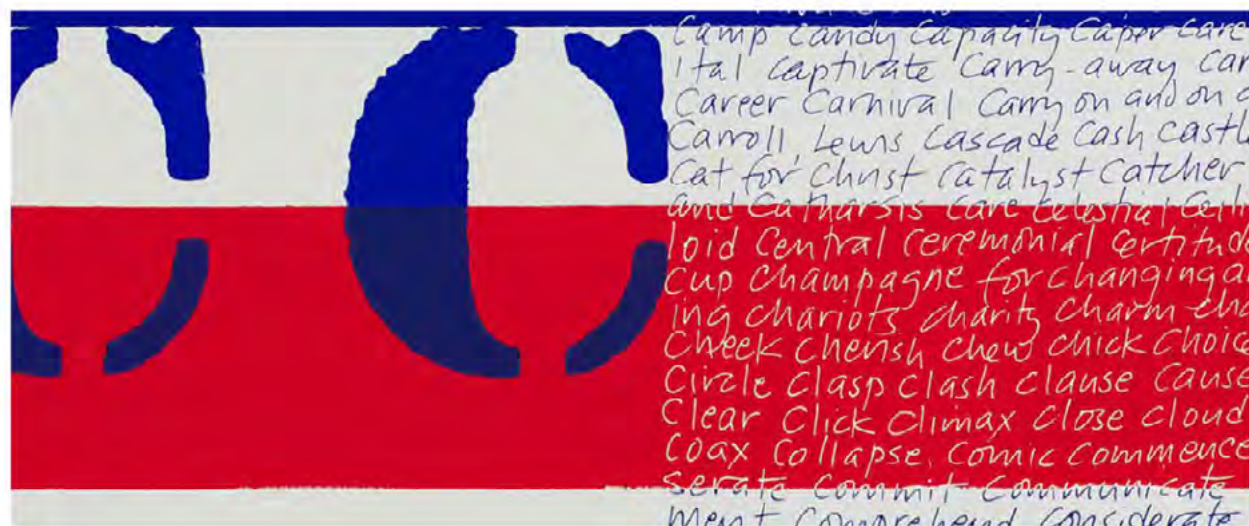
Crystal Balls, Red Light Spectacle and a Pop Art Nun: the Best Shows in Los Angeles



BY SIMONE KRUG

14 FEB 2019

As the inaugural Frieze Los Angeles opens this week, here are the exhibitions you shouldn't miss across the city





Kelly Akashi, 'Figure Shifter', 2019, installation view. Courtesy: the artist and Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles

Kelly Akashi: 'Figure Shifter' <<https://frieze.com/event/kelly-akashi-2>>

François Ghebaly

2 February–10 March

Stare into Kelly Akashi's ethereal glass orbs and gently trickling fountains and sink into a realm permeated by celestial, spectral sheen. Cast hands and graceful glass blown forms swell, descend, and shrivel in the artist's exhibition 'Figure Shifter'. These forms seem to reflect our own appendages – a palm prostrate, its outstretched recumbent digits curled in leisure or repose. Here, there is an odd beauty in the curvature of a thumb wrinkle. Fingers dip into sleek bulbous vessels, a louche touch balanced and lingering on the artist's vaguely anthropomorphic silhouettes.

Akashi's objects are not simply appealing in their sheen, but provocative shapes that seep into globs and form puddles at once uncanny, appealing, and familiar. In *Flowing Figure* (2019), water dribbles out of a glass conch pump into an upturned bronze umbrella, an unlikely fountain both sputtering and beautiful. Elsewhere intricately patterned glass orbs descend from thin twine, they resemble heavy lesions or internal organs that allude to the tug of gravity and of time. Bright chromogenic photograms present scans of her glass blown forms that appear as fragments of flora and fauna rendered as floating outlines or abstracted studies of paleontology.

Crystal Balls, Red Light Spectacle and a Pop Art Nun: the Best Shows in Los Angeles

Frieze, February 14, 2019

Simone Krug

The show is a whisper, a satisfying secret where the swells and tiny knots on a sea shell, the protruding root and of a shriveled onion, and the contorted whorl of a lump of speckled glass seem to offer up all the marvel of a crystal ball.



Trulee Hall, *Serpent White (Corn)*, 2018, resin, papier-mâché, fish tank rocks, wood, metal, linoleum, fabric, acrylic paint, found wooden folk corn, dimensions variable. Courtesy: the artist

Trulee Hall: 'The Other and Otherwise' <<https://frieze.com/event/trulee-hall>>

Maccarone

26 January–2 March

Have you ever woken in a cold sweat from a nightmare, that, on trying to fall back to sleep, was appealing and curious in a bewildering way? Trulee Hall's 'The Other and Otherwise' is a balletic, cacophonous, hallucination of painting, sculpture, installation, and video that is part nightmare, part chicken with its head cut off, and part feminist rumination on gender, sexuality, and the ordering (and disordering) of each. Hall's exhibition lends itself to the landscape of a stage, where one is both viewer and actor, moving among the wild scenery. Enter Act I through a rounded moon gate vestibule flanked by larger-than-life golden female forms with rounded heavy bottoms and buxom chests (*Golden Corn Entryway with Boob Fountain*, 2018). In the antechamber, freestanding wall breasts spout water from nipple fountains. The walls are alive

with clever symbols of fertility and the phallic. Among the varied kaleidoscopic works, pony tails jounce and butt cheeks quiver – the beat of the drummer at once erotic, absurd, and outlandish. Hall's ingenuity lies in her facility to straddle each. Cue the final act, where a motorized cob of corn (*Sweet Peeper*, 2018) pokes its way out of the gallery wall, a cheeky sexual awakening that chips away at the very infrastructure of the gallery.



Corita Kent, *f is for frog prince*, 1968, serigraph, 45 x 58 cm. Courtesy: the artist, Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community and POTS, Los Angeles

Corita Kent and Matt Keegan: 'I Wish to Communicate With You'

<<https://frieze.com/event/i-wish-communicate-you>>

Potts

13 January-14 April

Sister Corita Kent (1918-1986) was a nun-turned-artist best known for her silk screen printed serigraphs characterized by their graphic originality and cogent political messages of her era. Kent's interest in the iconographical and representational came to a head in her 26-serigraph A-Z series 'International Signal Code Alphabet' (1968), a novel reinterpretation of the International

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Code of Signals used by maritime vessels to communicate via flag, radiotelegraphy, semaphore, etc. While her alphabetical flags mimic the broad swaths and stripes of typical ensigns and banners, they likewise adopt positive and simple quotes, curlicue sketches, and the iconography of old-fashioned literary lettering. The flag for H professes 'H is for my heart' where Kent doodles fanciful faces in red and white lettering. Other letters and the words and images she chooses to include ('E is for everyone,' 'F is for frog prince,' 'P is for palm,' 'S is for saint,' etc.) speak to Kent's own life and devotion to the power of language to communicate.

Taking cues from the palette, technique, and methodology of Kent's flag system in folded and cut out paper form, contemporary artist Matt Keegan revitalizes Kent's objective of utilizing flags, lettering, and the like as an efficient system of communication. Keegan's 26 similarly hued silkscreened paper works entitled *Cutouts (c is for Corita)* (2018) are presented above and below Kent's flags, where a compelling juxtaposition – or conversation through space and time – comes to the fore.



Pierre Guyotat, *Untitled*, 2017, pen, colored pencil, gouache, pastel, graphite on paper, 34 x 25 cm.
Courtesy: the artist and The Box, Los Angeles

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Pierre Guyotat and Christoph von Weyhe: 'Scenes and Stages'

<https://frieze.com/event/pierre-guyotat-0>

The Box

2 February–30 March

In 'Scenes and Stages' Pierre Guyotat's half-dressed creatures of the night peer out of elongated windows, congregating citizens of the red-light district spectacle. Swaths of pink and reddish flesh encircled by flecks of dark hair appear throughout the artist and author's drawings, perverted scenes that prey on the ribald escapades and fantasies some partake in after dark. Here, we are rendered unwitting voyeurs. Guyotat's flagrant impulses permeate his writings, which have been historically censored for their intense carnal brutality. In one work, the artist depicts a street fight with spilled blood on the cobblestone and a sea of nude and near nude men either scrambling or oblivious to the filth and violence (*Untitled*, 2017). Yet these characters read as studies of men he has known, of streets he has passed, fragmented memories like a floating fistful of cash, a (sacred) offering to this infinitude of bodies.

In another room, Christoph von Weyhe depicts a wholly different frame of reference for the night: dark and bewitching scenes of the Port of Hamburg devoid of figures. His painted angular lines and shapes are at once abstract configurations and distinguishable forms like a street light cast on the water, the outline of a floating crane, or cantilevered scaffolding. In his ethereal scenes, the harbour is not merely a site of passage, of trade, of transition, but a site of lingering and of reflection.



'Time is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today' <<https://frieze.com/event/time-running-out-time>>

Art + Practice

2 February–14 September

'Time is Running Out of Time' collapses filmic time, layering and collaging African American narrative and experimental cinema from the 1970s to today into a thoughtful composite portrait of history, the quotidian, and the imagined. The exhibition takes its roots in the formative values of the L.A. Rebellion filmmakers, a core group of artists that formed out of the UCLA film programme in the 1960s–80s whose work is characterized by its portrayal of everyday life in African American communities. Their documentary and experimental work from this era is celebrated for its sensitivity to relevant social and political issues and its resistance to mainstream cinematic influence. These same conventions reverberate in the film works of younger artists working today.

The astute exhibition is rife with archival material from African and African American history – from recognizable political figures to pop culture television clips and interviews with contemporary practising artists. In Ben Caldwell's *Medea* (1973) images of African ancestors in regal headdresses rapidly flash across the screen, followed by a woman at church, Martin Luther King Junior, a sign for a segregated doctor's office, and many more black and white photographs; this is 20th-century black culture spinning in orbit. In the same video, Caldwell inserts footage of a pregnant woman about to give the birth – her baby will inherit the weight of these images, along with their cultural narratives and social implications. Works by younger artists like Martine Syms' video *My Only Idol Is Reality* (2017) dwells on black subjectivity as it manifests in pop culture. Syms presents re-recorded footage of the first season of the popular reality television programme *The Real World* (1992), isolating a verbal dispute between a black man and a white woman about opportunity and skin colour. The garbled, blurry footage loops, abstracting this already complex work of social critique.

Alima Lee and Mandy Harris Williams' insightful *Portals 1: Ja'Tovia Gary* (2018) amplifies the voice of their subject, a young African American woman who speaks freely and joyously about her filmmaking practice, heartbreak, and feeling isolated from contemporary American current events while abroad. Their subject, presented on occasion in filtered, faded, and blurry hues, is likewise politicized, a woman who declares her need to take up space and be visible. So many collective narratives converge on these screens, a celebration of varying forms of cross generational celebration and resistance.

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Jamilah Sabur, *Un chemin escarpé (A steep path)*, 2018, video still. Courtesy: the artist and Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami

Jamilah Sabur: 'Un chemin escarpé / A steep path' <<https://frieze.com/event/jamilah-sabur>>

Hammer Museum

19 January–5 May

How do you measure the curvature and angle of a descending wave? And, what of an ocean floor's contents and the stories and lives of those who have traversed its watery pathways over time? Jamilah Sabur immerses viewers in her native Caribbean landscape – a dry sandy bank, a cloudy mountain range, a marshland with tall gently swaying grass. These visually striking outdoor scenes unfold over a 5-channel video installation *Un chemin escarpé / A steep path* (2018) that explores her island homeland and the politics of its borders, colonial history, and its social and global integration. One settles into the artist's immersive *mise-en-scène*, surrounded by the faint blue glow of the monitors.

The Caribbean landscape that Sabur depicts appear as many sites at once, a wide panorama here or a closely cropped embankment elsewhere. The artist herself emerges from the scenery, a costumed figure in a traditional white cricket uniform or donning a mask and worker's gloves. She performs idiosyncratic dances in these scenes, balancing on a thin wooden beam she carries along a wet meadow. In another scene, she rocks a wooden rhomboid frame – a personal reference to her mother and with that, to her motherland. This apparatus resembles an old-

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fashioned cartographer's tool. Yet Sabur reframes its use by planting this object in the sand and kneeling before it in a ritualistic-like gesture of worship and reverence for this land.



Emi Winter, *Untitled*, 2018, oil on board, 25 x 20 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles

Nancy Shaver and Emi Winter <<https://frieze.com/event/nancy-shaver-emi-winter-gathering-texture-following-form>>

Parker Gallery

3 February–30 March

A lone sock resting on a wood and fabric patchwork box is a humorous 3-dimensional *trompe l'oeil*, a garment one might mistake for the real thing. Nancy Shaver's *Flat Goods* (2006) and other sculptural works in 'Gathering Texture, Following Shape: Nancy Shaver and Emi Winter' are comprised of the 'the real thing' – found dress fabric, wooden spools, and other playful bric-a-brac. Her sculptures seem to take on multiple lives, where cast off detritus is revived as material and readymade pattern. While many sculptures recall grandma's beloved floral loveseat, one aberrant work (*Sentinel*, 2018) repurposes a faded wrestling character t-shirt.

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Installed before the house gallery fireplace beside the more decorative pieces, Shaver's fabric character opens his mouth in a tough guy scream and flexes his giant muscles. The shadows and contours of his body are cracked and peeling, a mark of time that likewise references the gradual decay of the body.

Nearby, Emi Winter's traditional Zapotec patterned rugs grace the gallery floor, objects that straddle the space of utility and ornament and that eventually, like a sock, will wear out. Like Winter, however, Shaver fragments these traditional designs, selecting parts of patterns to create unusual, striking geometric designs. Both artists use the texture and material of the conventional to subvert it.

Main image: Corita Kent, c is for clowns etc., 1968, serigraph, 45 x 58 cm. Courtesy: the artist, Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community and POITS, Los Angeles

SIMONE KRUG

Simone Krug is a curator and a writer based in Aspen and Los Angeles

Here Are 9 Spaces You Need to Visit to Understand LA's Vibrant Art Scene

Artnet News, February 12, 2019

Catherine Wagley

Here Are 9 Spaces You Need to Visit to Understand LA's Vibrant Art Scene

Here are the spots not to miss.

Catherine Wagley (<https://news.artnet.com/about/catherine-wagley-695>), February 12, 2019



Installation view, "Tadaaki Kuwayama: TK286-1/2-2-99, 1999" at Nonaka-Hill.

For years, an ambitious Los Angeles gallery hopper could head out on a Saturday morning and hit nearly every worthwhile exhibition in the city, zig-zagging between east side neighborhoods before heading west.

But the exponential growth in the number of LA art spaces over the past five years has made this impossible. Young dealers, mid-size spaces, and mega-galleries have put down roots everywhere in this sprawling city, which makes seeing art in Los Angeles a geographically and culturally variable experience.

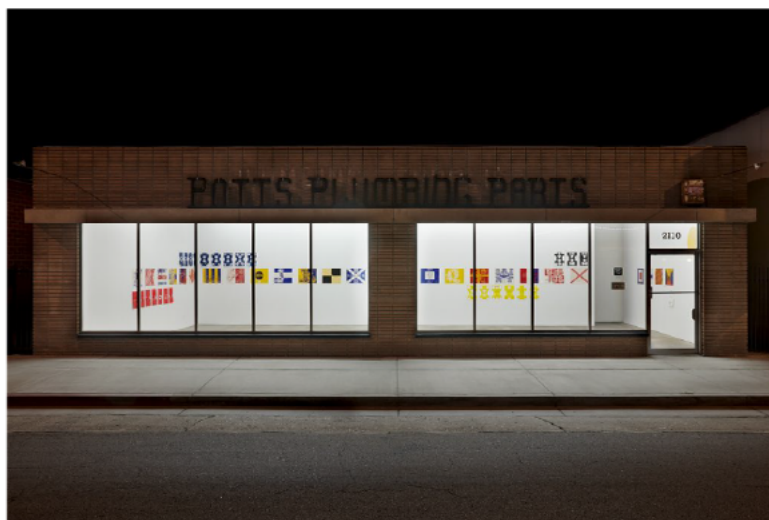
So where does one begin? Just in time for [Frieze Los Angeles \(https://news.artnet.com/market/fairs-in-la-for-frieze-2019-1456192\)](https://news.artnet.com/market/fairs-in-la-for-frieze-2019-1456192), we've put together a guide looking at the most vibrant, cutting-edge art spaces in town.

Here Are 9 Spaces You Need to Visit to Understand LA's Vibrant Art Scene

Artnet News, February 12, 2019

Catherine Wagley

POTTS



View of | "I Wish to Communicate With You: Corita Kent & Matt Keegan" at POTTS, Los Angeles.

The late Corita Kent, the radical former nun and Pop Conceptualist, designed 26 flags in 1968, one for each letter of the alphabet, all based on maritime signals. The sassy works, which blur cultural references (Book of Revelation meets Winnie the Pooh), currently hang at POTTS, a collectively run space that's also showing works by Matt Keegan. His paper cut-outs, also done in primary colors, act like punctuation marks on Kent's alphabet.

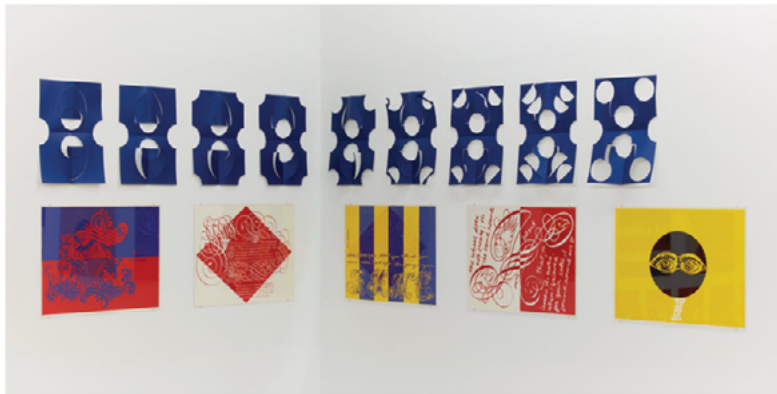
The space is run by six collaborators out of a former plumbing shop (also called POTTS) and combines exhibitions of new art with rediscoveries of older work. Exhibition design is perhaps the group's forte, and since their tall, wide windows open onto the street, their shows are eye candy to passerby.

[POTTS \(http://potts.la\)](http://potts.la) is at 2130 Valley Boulevard, Alhambra.

"I Wish to Communicate With You: Corita Kent & Matt Keegan (<http://potts.la/i-wish-to-communicate-with-you>)" is on view through April 14.

Corita Kent and Matt Keegan: Potts
Artforum, 2019
Andy Campbell

ARTFORUM



View of "Corita Kent and Matt Keegan," 2019. Top row: Matt Keegan, "Cutouts (c is for Corita)," 2019; Bottom row: Corita Kent, "International Signal Code Alphabet," 1968.

Corita Kent and Matt Keegan

POTTS

Amid the swelling civil unrest that would culminate in the international protest movements of 1968, a nun in Los Angeles was wavering in her faith. "I'm really frightened to say this," Sister Corita Kent (1912–1986) wrote in a letter to a friend, "but everything appears different to me, even God, and I'm so afraid that I'm losing the foundation of my belief." Soon thereafter, Kent took a sabbatical from her chairship of art at her order's college and absconded to Cape Cod for the summer; by the end of her time there, she had decided to leave the order and renounce her vows. During this soul-searching break, Kent would watch the boats moving in and out of the harbor; inspired by the twenty-six letter flags of the International Code of Signals, a system used to communicate messages between ships, she created an elaborate series of serigraphic prints.

The installation of Kent's series "International Signal Code Alphabet," 1968, at the Potts gallery might be best appreciated within this larger frame of her crisis of faith. Installed alongside a suite of responsive works by Matt Keegan, Kent's prints are hung in a neat horizontal line and faced with highly reflective glass that sometimes frustrates looking. Like much of Kent's output, the prints feature dense layers of meaning, graphically finessed to the point of deceptive simplicity. The print for *B*, which is usually read as *Bravo* (and communicates that a ship is onloading, off-loading, or carrying dangerous goods), pairs

Corita Kent and Matt Keegan: Potts
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the red polygonal flag with the corresponding letter in large calligraphy and a few “handwritten” lines from W. H. Auden’s “Prologue at Sixty” (1967):

CAN SIXTY MAKE SENSE TO SIXTEEN-PLUS?
WHAT HAS MY CAMP IN COMMON WITH THEIRS, WITH BUTTONS AND
BEARDS AND BE-INS?
MUCH I HOPE. IN ACTS IT IS WRITTEN
TASTE WAS NO PROBLEM AT PENTECOST.

Auden’s words might have appealed to both Kent’s religious sensibilities and her connection to a politically active younger generation, who clearly inspired Kent and for whom she was also an inspiration. Throughout the series, the divine (*j is for jesus* and *s is for saint*) sits alongside the mundane (*d is for digging it* and *l is for ladybug*). In some prints, the two meet. Ventriloquizing George Harrison, Kent asserts in *v is for vibrations* that God is found in the act WHERE YOU’RE NOT DOING IT PARTICULARLY FOR YOURSELF, BUT YOU’RE DOING IT FOR EVERYONE ELSE, FOR WHOEVER WANTS IT. . . . Such a statement handily applies to Kent’s outlook on art as an unpretentious gift for an unknown other, a potential sibling in the struggle for a more peaceful, compassionate world.

Movingly titled “Cutouts (*c is for Corita*),” Keegan’s 2019 series of monochromatic silk-screen prints manages to humbly amplify the affect of the nun’s abecedary, proposing a counter melody of abstract gestures. Starting with the palette of primary colors dominant in Kent’s prints and taking the form of a folded piece of paper, Keegan made full and partial symmetrical cutouts in the internal spaces and edges of each sheet; these flaps and folds give the paper a third dimension absent in Kent’s prints. The resulting forms at times echo flags, crosses, and letters themselves.

This is not the first time that Keegan has shown work in tandem with, and in response to, a fellow artist interested in the communicative powers and impasses of text. His epistolary exchange with Kay Rosen was the subject of the wanly named 2016–17 exhibition “A Travelling Show.” Unlike in that dialogue, which hinged on the hidey-holes and iterative possibilities of language, Keegan’s work here is almost entirely devoid of text. The only

Corita Kent and Matt Keegan: Potts
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exception is *It Goes Without Saying*, 2011, a circle of yellow steel hung high on the wall, an errant sun in which the work's titular phrase is laser-cut in eight successive semicircles. Installed near the gallery's entrance, it serves as both a greeting and a farewell.

How does one say goodbye to a part of their identity? This question must have nagged at Kent during the summer of 1968. Thankfully, she was transparent about her process of transformation, even when she was unsure of her destination.

— Andy Campbell

Word Prompts: Matt Keegan's *Replicate*

BOMB, 2017

Claire Barliant

BOMB

Word Prompts: Matt Keegan's Replicate by Claire Barliant

An exhibition exploring forms of repetition and difference.



Matt Keegan: Replicate, 2017. Installation view. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

What do you think of when you hear the word "cloud"? White puffs of air? Cotton candy? These are two responses—the first from a young boy, the latter from a much older man—in Matt Keegan's engrossing two-channel video installation, *Generation*, 2016. The main draw at his first institutional U.S. solo exhibition, deftly curated by assistant director Daisy Nam at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts in Cambridge, MA, the installation is made up of two screens that face each other, with one of them displaying a video in which the artist interviews members of his family. Each subject is shot starkly from the waist up against a monochrome background, and Keegan's interviews consist of him asking the person to define a word and then visualize it in terms of shape, color, weight, and movement. The images, including a "rolling pin" for "mother" and an "arrow" for "home," are rendered as computer-generated animations that appear on the opposite screen. Between these specific images, the screen animation consists of a glass pitcher of water being filled and poured onto a brain, which then sprouts a neural system. This simple animation illustrates Keegan's own thoughts—but also seems to symbolize how easily people are influenced by external media and ideas—and how these thoughts, be they toxic or tonic, spread throughout bodies, both individual and collective.

Word Prompts: Matt Keegan's *Replicate*
BOMB, 2017
Claire Barliant



Matt Keegan, Channel 1 of *Generation*, 2016. Two-channel video (color, sound). 44:30 min Installation view. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

Some word prompts lead to more passionate and emotional responses, such as "immigrant" and "race:" ("I didn't hear growing up all the racism I hear now;" says Keegan's father. Meanwhile, Keegan's young niece defines "race" as "competing against someone, and if you get there first, you win.") The video, which was made before the U.S. presidential election, is shadowed but not overcome by politics. Instead it is a portrait of an American family who proves to be strongly opinionated and individualistic. Shots of Keegan's sisters with their children at home are interspersed with the single-person interviews and move the dial back and forth from solo to ensemble, reminding us that family often surrounds and shapes children, but never entirely engulfs them.

Word Prompts: Matt Keegan's *Replicate*

BOMB, 2017

Claire Barliant



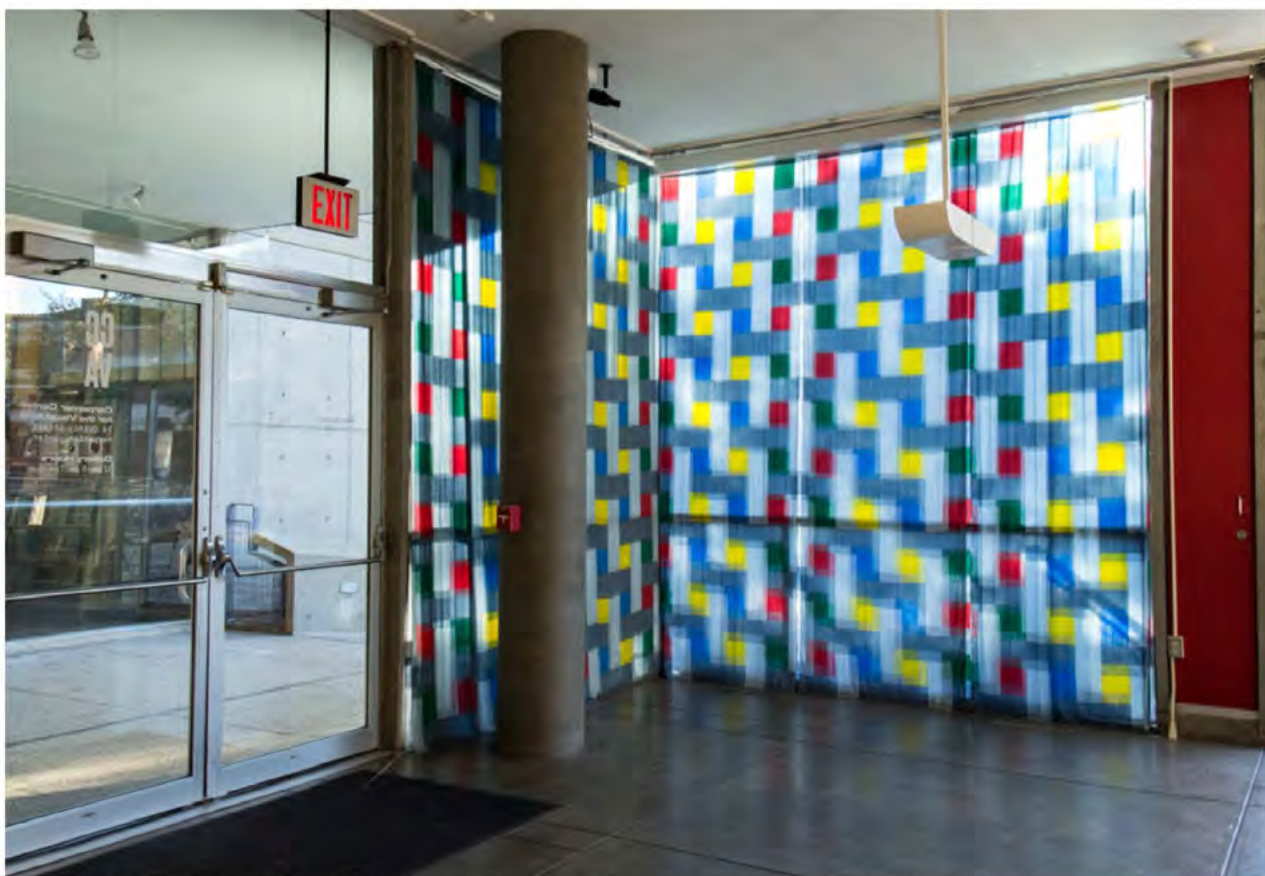
Matt Keegan, Detail of Cutouts (*Echo*), 2016. One of pair, powder-coated steel, iPod, 2 transducers, amp with looped audio composed by Sergei Tcherepnin. 58 x 80 inches (each). Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

Other components of the show include a lattice composed of cardboard strips that covers two of the walls outside the black box in which *Generation* is projected. Themes of imbrication, multiplication, and, as the title suggests, replication, repeat and compound throughout the show. Two powder-coated steel sculptures mounted on the wall, based on simple paper cutouts, emit an abstract sound piece composed by Sergei Tcherepnin and created by Keegan's pounding on the very same sculptures. What started as a childish art project is then transmuted into sophisticated sculptures, which are then employed as instruments and conveyors of the sound work made by these very same instruments. Keegan is into layering, but also transparency, so none of this comes across as unnecessarily fussy or pretentious, but rather considered and intriguing.

Word Prompts: Matt Keegan's *Replicate*

BOMB, 2017

Claire Barliant



Matt Keegan. *Corbu Lattice*, 2017. Pair of two panels, cotton and rayon. Panel one: 111 x 141 inches; panel two: 132 x 141 inches. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University

Near the entrance, a luminous curtain riffs on the bold primary colors selected by Le Corbusier to highlight the Carpenter Center building's aerators—small channels that run up and down the sides of the walls, meant to circulate air. This is easily one of the most beautiful exhibitions to appear at the Carpenter Center over the past two years, showing the quirky building to great advantage. Although the elements at play in Keegan's show are relatively simple, evoking early childhood education fundamentals like language, shape, and color, together they conjure an atmosphere both elegant and thought-provoking.

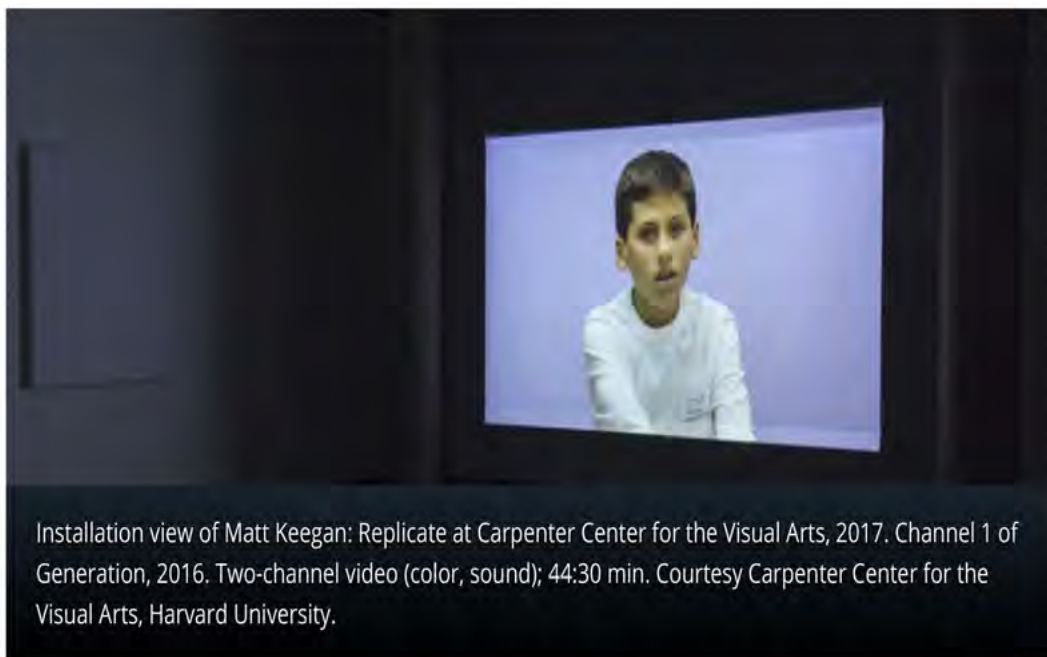
Matt Keegan: *Replicate* is on view at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge, MA, until January 7, 2018.

Family Resemblances: Matt Keegan at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Big Red & Shiny, November 28, 2017

Josh Fischer

& BIG RED AND SHIN'



Installation view of Matt Keegan: *Replicate* at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 2017. Channel 1 of *Generation*, 2016. Two-channel video (color, sound); 44:30 min. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

Family Resemblances: Matt Keegan at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

BY JOSH FISCHER ON NOVEMBER 28, 2017

In Matt Keegan's 45-minute video *Generation* – the centerpiece of his solo exhibition at the [Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts](#) – he takes a deceptively simple approach to tackle the knotty intersections of family and identity with funny, thought-provoking results. Keegan interviews his mother, father, siblings, nephews, and nieces. He asks each to define common words fraught with emotional, social, and political meaning – like mother, father, feminine, masculine, love, sex, race, and immigrant – as well as more lighthearted terms, such as clouds, ghost, and magic. What unfolds are revealing moments of spontaneity where Keegan's family members free-associate with one-word answers or spiraling definitions. His divorced father heartbreakingly describes the word "love" as "[something]I was never very good at...." His nephew, who offers wonderfully elaborate definitions, goes from describing magic as a cheap trick at a party to brimming with enthusiasm that just being alive in the world is "very magical."

Family Resemblances: Matt Keegan at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Big Red & Shiny, November 28, 2017

Josh Fischer



Installation view of Matt Keegan: Replicate at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 2017. Channel 1 of Generation, 2016. Two-channel video (color, sound); 44:30 min. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

Each word is paired with a corresponding animation that shows an object coming to life. The objects are not invented by Keegan, but created by asking each person to imagine the shape, color, weight, and motion of a word. The animations are idiosyncratic abstractions that capture a word's feeling and meaning in wonderful ways. His mother describes a dark, heavy, and radiating stone to represent "father." A water pitcher that perpetually pours itself into existence while simultaneously evaporating against a bright white background illustrates "clouds." Interspersed with these interviews and animations are individual profiles of selected family members in their homes, who explain how they came to reside there and describe some of their various knick-knacks and possessions. His mother's tour of her apartment is especially relatable and humorous as she calls her tchotchkes a bunch of "junk" with sentimental value, drawing attention to a mirror that she knows her son does not like but reminds her of Spain.

Family Resemblances: Matt Keegan at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts

Big Red & Shiny, November 28, 2017

Josh Fischer



Installation view of Matt Keegan: *Replicate* at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 2017. Channel 2 of *Generation*, 2016. Two-channel video (color, sound); 44:30 min. Courtesy Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University.

Keegan uses his exhibition's title, *Replicate*, to describe a reproductive process that does not make a duplicate but a close copy. Creating a family is a process of replication – family members share DNA and experiences, but always form unique identities. Part of the pleasure of Keegan's video is seeing this in action as the meaning of each word changes as it passes through the lens of each individual. Watching *Generation*, I could not help but think about my own family and coming up with ad hoc definitions while playing word games like *Taboo* or *Catchphrase*. These games are founded on the idea that people rarely come up with the same definition of a word and more commonly define a word with wildly different, often humorous immediate associations.

In such games and in Keegan's collaboration with his family, asking for singular definitions becomes the perfect foil for reveling in multiplicity and showing how meaning is contextual and subjective. Although he does not include every response, his editing does not shape his content into a heavy-handed, explicit message. Instead, Keegan provides an intelligent framework, lets his family speak for themselves, and listens to what's generated.

Interview: Matt Keegan
Contemporary Art Stavanger, 2015
Marte Danielsen Jølbo

CONTEMPORARY ART STAVANGER

Interview: Matt Keegan



Matt Keegan - Portable Document Format
Photo by Christopher Jonassen, courtesy of Rogaland
Kunstsenter

Matt Keegan is currently exhibiting at Rogaland Kunstsenter. The exhibition, titled *PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT*, is the American artist's first solo exhibition in Norway. Below, curator and CAS editor Marte Danielsen Jølbo talks with Keegan about the exhibition, working at the kunstsenter, and his work in relationship to this new Norwegian context.

Marte Danielsen Jølbo: We can read in the invitation to the exhibition that this is a retrospective of your sculptural practice since 2006. The original sculptures were made in sheetrock (plaster board) and steel, but in this exhibition you present a remake of the sculptures in cardboard. What is behind this choice? Why this reflection and re-working of your earlier works now? (And are all the works presented re-produced or are there new works included as well?)

Matt Keegan: *Portable Document Format* will be accompanied by a publication that launches in the fall. This is the first opportunity that I've had to work with writers and artist friends to reflect on my work. This process of reflection was then translated to the work that I made in Stavanger. I work with cardboard to make test versions of my sculptures. I figure out scale and design issues--

spacing, font, and font size in this material, before making the work in steel. Because cardboard is already part of the work, it made sense to remake selected sculptures (from 2006-2014) in this material.

Additionally, I wanted to produce this exhibition in the space of the show. Everything was either fabricated in the gallery or in the print shop in the floor below it. My work usually requires outside fabrication and I wanted this show to make use of the facilities that already exist within the Kunstsenter.

MDJ: The cardboard sculptures have been produced in Stavanger and will never leave the city as they will be destroyed and recycled after the exhibition period. How do you view the new works' relationship to the original sculptures? What lays in the destruction of them?

MK: The various people who worked on the show will get to keep a sculpture of their choosing and the rest will be recycled. I think of these cardboard versions as placeholders or surrogates for the original works. They were made with a high-level of fidelity to the originals, but have a different life and circulation. These works were made in and for Rogaland Kunstsenter and were fabricated in a material that is easy to dispose of for that reason. I don't think of this gesture as destructive in a dramatic sense, it just highlights the run of the show and mirrors the life of the exhibition.

MDJ: The material, as a surrogate, or a sketch, also has a different potential than the works you would normally display in a gallery situation. RKS director Geir Haraldseth says he's inclined to think of it as a way of internalizing the art center, which is a very different entity for showing works of art than for example your gallery Altman Siegel where you exhibited earlier this year. What are your thoughts on this? And the specifics of showing in the non-commercial context of the art center? Does it give you the opportunity to pursue some other interests/issues in your practice?

MK: I agree that this show is different from a commercial gallery show like Altman Siegel, but not because the work is made in cardboard, or because it was produced on site. The main difference is the retrospective nature of the show and the process of remaking and exhibiting pre-existing works. Exhibiting at a non-profit institution removes any concern about selling work and recouping production expenses, which is freeing. This particular exhibition also made more sense for a new audience in a country that I have yet to exhibit in. It's an introduction as well as a looking back.

MDJ: Can you tell us a bit about the background of the

exhibition's title *Portable Document Format*?

MK: PDFs are familiar, compressed, and easily circulated file formats. The show has an efficiency that I've stated above. Since all of the exhibited works began as file formats—whether Microsoft Word, Illustrator, InDesign, or CAD, and eventually become Jpegs or Tiffs, I think of these works as existing in a space between file and artwork.

MDJ: You often use text in your work, with an emphasis both on letters' form and the patterns they make, as well as the content's meaning and references. Can you tell us how you became interested in using text and how you use it in your practice today? (How) has it changed over time? (Possibly also talk about the use of humor here).

MK: I have worked with text since early into my undergraduate studies. I'm not sure why I've always been interested in this, but do know that the pedagogical emphasis on discourse (conversation and exchange) where I went to college was central to my interest in becoming an artist. The way that I incorporate language today is not so different than how I worked with it then. I'm drawn to vernacular phrasing and words and phrases that have an open-ended (or emptied out) meaning. I'm often drawn to phrasing that has an inherent symmetry (More Like Mother/Father for example) and can be used to build a pattern, shape or otherwise. *Nas in Nancy*-- the video that features my mother assigning words and phrases to her handmade collection of flashcards, originally used to teach English-as-a-Second-Language students, injects the most humor into the show. Translation can provide funny results. Language and meaning are both slippery. There's a fluidity (speed) to language, and when it's presented in fragments or without context, there's an awkwardness that underscores the absurdity of the clarity / consensus that language (spoken or written) purports to have.

MDJ: You also have a work in the exhibition that states the name 'Meryl Streep' repetitiously. What is the background of this work? Why her?

MK: *Meryl Streep* is a replica of a sculpture that I made in 2008. The original was made in sheetrock with 5-7 layers of primer + paint and then cut and peeled to the paper just before the plaster. I then went back in with gold leaf, to gild actress's name. For Rogaland, I remade this work by silkscreening her name on a sheet of cardboard. I decided to remove color from the

sculptures, beyond the colors of the double-wall cardboard + black and grey.

The short version of the back story for this work, is that I had a solo show in 2008, my first in Los Angeles, that highlighted points of comparison between the final years of the Reagan Administration (mid-to-late 1980's) and the lead up to the 2008 US presidential election, after George W. Bush's two miserable terms. I mapped political as well as social/ cultural overlaps between these time periods, using a 1986 fundraiser called "Hands Across America" as a point of departure. I also focused on the public emergence of AIDS during Reagan's presidency, and candidates, including Barack Obama, tendency to heroicize/mythologize Reagan's presidency. In researching popular music, books, and movies of the 1980's, I realized that Meryl Streep was in a movie every year, that decade. I created a portrait that highlighted her as an icon of that decade, as well as 2008.

MDJ: You mention earlier that the exhibition will be followed by a publication this fall. Can you elaborate on how you view your work with the publication in relation to the exhibition? And can you tell us more about the role of publications and publication making in your art practice in general?

MK: The publication is a direct extension of this show and not an exhibition catalog. In some ways I consider it to be a second site of *Portable Document Format*, although both are self-sufficient. I've worked as an independent publisher since 2004. Between 2004-2010, I edited and published a small-run arts edition called *North Drive Press*(NDP). Between 2005-2007 I was involved with curatorial projects that had significant publication companions. In 2012, I began a new edition called == (www.equalequal.info) that is an extension of NDP with a focus on featured artists, as well as more written content. Working on all the above for over a decade directly impacted my thinking about exhibition-making and display structures. NDP was an unbound publication that came in a box, and informed my ideas of how to arrange and reconfigure the box of a given venue to best present my work and engage its audience.

Matt Keegan - Altman Siegel

Artforum, 2015

Monica Westin

ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks

Matt Keegan - Altman Siegel

By Monica Westin



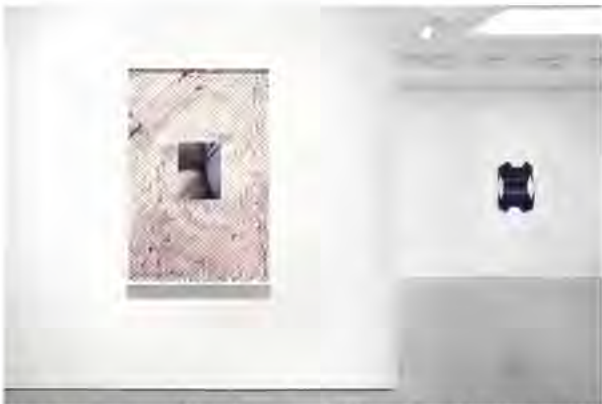
Matt Keegan, *Crossed w/ Strips (Soft Pink)*, 2014, spray-finished laser-cut steel, pigmented silicon, 32 1/2 x 23".

The wall sculptures and photographs that comprise Matt Keegan's "And" seem deceptively soft and disarmingly modest. Large C-prints of found machine-made shapes, such as a scrap of rusted and twisted industrial metal in *Was* (all works 2014) or the repeated squares of a car speaker in *Speaker*, are lit gently, creating velvety layers of shadows. The predominant steel wall sculptures, laser cut and modeled after paper cutouts, are painted in improbable pastels, sometimes powder-coated hues of blush and muted mauves and oranges. Several utilize the same shape repeated in different colors (as in the "Crossed w/ Strips" series). Against a built-in panel of pale-salmon sheetrock that extends across the gallery walls,

Keegan's work at first reads as serene and surprisingly mild given the formal, sharp geometry of its objects. But upon closer inspection, a subtle but carefully hatched grid is carved into this pink layer of drywall, which loosens the effect of each individual wall piece as a stable body in space. Against this lattice, the sculptures create the impression that they are models for nonexistent objects, or hypermagnified fragments of manufactured materials, and photographs of grates and other found grids lose their sense of proportion. The driving concern of "And" is that of scale and how it affects what we perceive as pattern, texture, and shape. At what point do we interpret a figure as being part of a larger pattern or as its own autonomous presence? Ultimately, Keegan disturbs the ways that we interpret the warp and weft of the things that hold our manufactured world together.

Interview

Matt Keegan: Form and Function
By Colleen Kelsey
September 11, 2014



Installation view: Matt Keegan and Anne Truitt September 12 - October 22, 2014 Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York. © The artist. Photograph by Lance Brewer, Image courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York.

Speaking to *The Washington Post* in 1987, the late minimalist sculptor Anne Truitt said, "I've struggled all my life to get maximum meaning in the simplest possible form."

Mass, space, surface, and color—the elements of sculpture, at their purest—compose forms that encapsulate the vagaries of language and narrative in physical space. Truitt's spare totems, which she sanded until smooth, treated with gesso, and strategically applied layers of acrylic paint to, combined the disciplines of painting and sculpture and were emblematic of her preoccupation with meaning and form.

Brooklyn-based artist Matt Keegan, whose body of work has integrated sculpture, photography, video, and text, has investigated fabrication, form, and language, and the signs and codes of color in cultural and social contexts. Keegan, long interested in Truitt and her practice, puts himself and Truitt in conversation in his latest exhibition, "Matt Keegan and Anne Truitt," now on view at Andrea Rosen's satellite gallery space in New York.



Together, Keegan and Truitt's works not only explore, but also symbiotically meditate upon the multiple meanings of color, surface, tactility, and materiality at work in the other. "Over the last three years, I'd been consistently thinking about color from municipal usage for this show I did in 2011 using bridge colors," Keegan says. "I had seen Truitt's latest exhibition at Matthew Marks Gallery ['Threshold: Work from the '70s']. I'd already known the work, but that exhibition in particular really made an impact on me. The way she used color really struck me as someone who's working with minimalist vernacular."



The exhibition prominently features Truitt's *Landfall* (1970), a totemic sculpture painted with undulating tones of blue, and new sculpture and photographic works from Keegan, including a series of spray-finished and powder-coated untitled steel sculptures originally modeled from paper. "I'm always interested in trying to create installation decisions that make you aware of your body either in the space or in the way you move through the space. Because the totem almost functions as a central fulcrum, you really move through the show around the work," Keegan explains.

Matt Keegan: Form and Function


Interview, September 11, 2014

Colleen Kelsey

Keegan also integrates patterned sheetrock panels, installed as a wallpaper, throughout the gallery space. Keegan, who has used this sheetrock in previous freestanding sculptures, repositions it here as an element that serves as a container and ground for the other works.

"A big shift for me was that there isn't any text to the show. That was a conscious decision in wanting to work with a palette or shapes or a pattern that's familiar. There's not the concretizing period at the end that comes with language," he says. "There is a funny uneasiness in not having the work be rooted in a specific set of research or project based concerns. In letting the material do specific things, or letting there be a space of assembly and disassembly for the viewer, there's something more generative, and more of a dialogue."

Matt Keegan. Horizon
Expresso, May 18, 2013
Celso Martins



★★★★
HORIZON
Matt Keegan
Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisboa, até 1 de junho

Um avião em miniatura baloiçando na montra da galeria dá o mote a uma exposição com um carácter quase monográfico em torno de uma personagem. Lá dentro há imagens fotográficas com filtros coloridos de paisagens aéreas, aviões e uma imagem cinematográfica onde o tema da aviação impera. Matt Keegan (1976) é um artista nova-iorquino cujo trabalho é com frequência heteróclito, estilisticamente e em termos de meios (fotografia, pintura, vídeo, escultura), lançando mão, com frequência, a referências ao imaginário veiculado pelo cinema, a imprensa ou o design. "Horizon" não é exceção. Várias pinturas repetem a palavra "shadow" como um eco ótico, enquanto outras articulam palavras e frases como labirintos visuais, duas pinturas são superfícies monocromáticas veladas por persianas reais. Em "Horizon", todos estes elementos funcionam como uma rede, uma espécie de texto visual onde os signos e referências comunicam entre si, gravitando em torno de uma hospedeira da TAP que nos é apresentada num vídeo e através dos seus desenhos. Mais do que produzir uma narrativa linear, a obra de Keegan entrelaça o visual e o verbal de modo a produzir ressonâncias, campos de sentido que vivem em associação criando nexos ficcionais e narrativos mas nunca se extinguindo numa leitura definitiva. Para além de ser um criador de objetos ou difusor de imagens, Keegan é igualmente um proplador cujo trabalho passa pela possibilidade de estabelecer estas ligações e de fazer com que elas se ativem na imaginação do observador.

C.M.

IDIOM

**Federal Blue & Deep Cool Red:
A Conversation with Matt Keegan**
by Zak Kitnick, November 26, 2012

Zak Kitnick: What's your favorite color? I thought we would start simple. But I think it's a question that makes sense after seeing your last solo show in New York. In *I Apple New York*, you see this color and it's kind of familiar but also anonymous and you realize it's the color of the bridges connecting the five boroughs. So there's this conceptual relationship to color. Maybe we could talk about that show, or that decision, that process.

Matt Keegan: I learned about the bridge color palette that is maintained by New York City's Public Design Commission, from an arts writer named Graham T. Beck. We were seated together at our friends' wedding. Graham wrote about this commission for the New York Times in the fall of 2008, and when we met he was in the process of writing a larger article about the federal color palette, which is this color deck (*shows*).

ZK: This is a real thing?

MK: That's the real color deck! You can order it for \$158.

ZK: It seems like an artist book except it's useful.

MK: I know, it seems like a Ruscha multiple. So the NYC commission maintains seven colors for bridges in the five boroughs, which include: Deep Cool Red, Federal Blue, George Washington Bridge Gray, Aluminum Green, Pulaski Red, Munsell Gray and Dark Green. Federal Blue and Deep Cool Red are my personal favorites. And, this Federal deck is used for anything that's maintained by federal money — from mailbox blue to colors used by OSHA and NASA, the highway system, parks, etc. I became really interested in the idea that, of course, color is also a language! When you think about it in these familiar applications, like language, things disappear or are taken for granted. For example, you may not think about the blue of a mailbox nor would you think about the color of the George Washington Bridge as you traverse it, but they are particular, maintained and applied colors.

ZK: Are you using especially anonymous colors? Or they become iconic only when they're applied to something? With the Golden Gate Bridge, there's all of this labor, painting and repainting, and it's the icon

of a city. But when you isolate the color from the object, when it's just applied to panels, it becomes symbolic.

MK: I think the Golden Gate Bridge is an anomaly for how the red resides in such an open expanse. You see the grandeur of the Verrazano Bridge when you go to the Rockaways but in New York there's a different density of information, so you don't see bridges in the same way you do in San Francisco. Byron Kim is the artist representative for the Public Design Commission, and four colors were added to the commission during his tenure. He mentioned two interesting details that were considered in selecting colors for bridges: one was thinking about the colors in relationship to the sky, which I think is beautiful to consider, and the other criteria which was used to determine the red for the Hell Gate Bridge is that this color was chosen specifically for how it would fade. It's interesting to think about color as something durational. Graham T. Beck wrote that the federal color palette was initially created to simplify the manufacture of camouflage green. There were too many different greens in use so there needed to be a way to systematize one uniform color.

ZK: These are large-scale industrial applications. I read something a while ago that referred to your practice as 'domestic conceptualism.' But maybe we could think about some of the work in terms of urban conceptualism. There's a recurring interest in cities. In particular, your last show felt like a love song to the city you live in. I sometimes forget that you're also a photographer, so those color panels served as a background for these photographic observations. I thought that was a nice fusion, these observations of the city against the colors of the city.

MK: Yeah, the photographs provided a walking pace of the city. I wanted them to have a meandering quality, because the palette was rooted in this particular color system and other parts of the show were also quite specific. For example, I made a book called *A History of New York* that was an image-based iteration of the Ric Burns PBS series *New York*. My documentary short, *Biography / Biographer*, is about my father's experience working at a private golf club frequented and later condemned by Robert Moses. I thought that these components had different registers of fixity and I wanted the photographs to have a more open logic. They were not depicting a particular neighborhood nor telling a specific story.

ZK: You just had a camera and walked around?

MK: Yeah I would say for over the course of about a year, I took a lot of pictures and the sixty that I exhibited were probably the edit of, I don't know, three hundred or so –

Federal Blue & Deep Cool Red: A Conversation with Matt Keegan

Idiom, November 26, 2012

Zak Kitnick



Keegan's 'Untitled (Group 11),' 2011.

ZK: A million?

MK: *laughs*, there were a million, or so photos. It's interesting because although photography has been a really consistent part of my work, for years now, I'm always negotiating my relationship to it. It's pretty irrelevant at this point, but I never studied photography in school.

ZK: It's nice when you don't know how to do something, it kind of keeps it interesting.

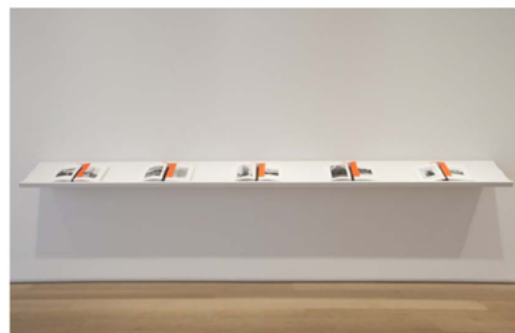
MK: I think about photography all the time and it directly impacts my thoughts about making videos.

ZK: The *Biography / Biographer* video in which your dad talks about Robert Moses was interesting. Just to hear about the person that instituted all these changes. We're in Greenpoint now, and they just announced that they're going ahead, and at the end of this street they're building ten different forty-story towers that will completely transform this neighborhood. I feel like sometimes there's so much change and it happens so fast, and it didn't used to be like this. But watching this video, one realizes change is not new, it's constant.

MK: Watching the Ric Burns' documentary *New York*, was such a good continuing ed class for learning about the city. What's clear early into the series is that from Alexander Hamilton to DeWitt Clinton and on, New York City has always been rooted in commerce, and is always in the midst of change. Robert Moses generated a tremendous amount of public projects as the "Master Builder" who was specifically focused on the automobile, and outward expansion to Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island. The building of condos on the waterfront of Greenpoint is just another form of an ever-changing NY landscape.

ZK: I guess now everything is being connected by ferry, which is interesting because it's becoming waterfront city like Chicago. Weren't you just in Chicago for a show and made a book...?

MK: Last fall, I was in a three-person show at the ART Institute of Chicago and I made an iteration of my *A History of New York* book. I tabbed in bookmarks that feature information extracted from a PBS series called *Chicago: City of The Century*. I watched this series and took highlighted facts that I found noteworthy and then tabbed them in within the chronology of pre-1900's New York.



'A History of New York (for Chicago),' 2011.

ZK: I should look at this thoroughly at some point. We're jumping around a lot, but that's because you do a lot of different things. And they're not unrelated. There's an interesting relationship between the books you're making and your text-based sculptures and wall-paintings. The sculptures have this simplicity and repetition, it almost seems like if you actually read it, it would feel like reading Gertrude Stein. But a book and a sculpture aren't read the same way. Even if there's a top and a bottom sometimes it's hard to discern a left and a right.

MK: I began recent talks at the Art Institute of Chicago and at NYU by showing *Biography/Biographer* followed by a short 2-channel video called *Nas in Nancy*, that features my mother alongside a series of images that she hand-assembled to teach English-as-a-Second-Language classes. As an image appears on the right-hand side, my mother immediately assigns words and phrases to them. I have some of them here.

ZK: Are these the actual flash cards? (*laughs*) Your mom is a good artist.

MK: She is! I go through about sixty of her flash cards over the course of the 3-minute video. So, for these lectures, I play the video of my father, I show install shots of *I Apple NY*, and then I show install shots from *Lengua*, which is the recent solo show I had at Altman Siegel that features the video of my mother. And I spoke about how I'm interested in trying to figure out the space of overlap between these two videos and exhibitions. And, I come to, not a conclusion, because who wants to make anything

Federal Blue & Deep Cool Red: A Conversation with Matt Keegan

Idiom, November 26, 2012

Zak Kitnick

conclusive, but the video of my father is abiding by a set of familiar parameters that we've become accustomed to on PBS, and I made a documentary that abides by a similar structure — it has a musical score, there's archival footage, there's a talking-head shot that guides most of the narration, etc. If you saw it on PBS, it wouldn't feel out of place. The video of my mother is completely different. It's an art video without question. She's assigning a set of words and phrases to a set of images that are implicitly intended to be read. Anyway, I bring up those lectures because my interest in language is the most foundational thing to my art making. I have always been interested in working with familiar phrases. With the *I Apple NY* show and *Lengua* the color system was really different. For *Lengua*, I chose colors that were related to the phrases, so for *Nothing to Declare* it's green because green means go. It's similar to the green used in EXIT signs. There are certain decisions that I made that were really dumb and they weren't rooted in a particular color system. I'm trying to figure out the space between those things. What's the space between the PBS-like documentary and the short video of my mom working with these images and language? There's something perverse in both, and both are contingent on subjectivity but I don't know, it's hard to articulate. I'm certain that language is at the root of all of the work and our ability to communicate — that's a central feature as well.

ZK: It seems like the way you're using your mother's ESL flash cards at the Kitchen right now is a distillation of all these disparate parts of your practice. There is this editing and cutting of the images, or cropping, and then this fundamental relationship of images to words. Looking at the work from the Kitchen, it's striking that a lot of these things are found images. In the past, a lot of your photographs (like *Sundays*) were photos of found objects.

MK: Yes. I had a show in San Francisco that featured a photograph titled *Sundays* that included items that I purchased at a weekend flea market while I lived in the Bay Area. This show, called *Postcards and Calendars*, was a precursor to *I Apple NY*. Rather than making photographs to generate a portrait of a city, I tried to create photographs that were stand-ins for days and months. This started from wanting to make an image of January 2009, before Obama officially became president. I hired someone to make a tracing of the *New York Times* image of Obama arriving in Virginia and then I photographed that tracing. I also exhibited twelve calendars, loaned from the Gay, Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Historical Society from San Francisco that included calendars that recorded political marches, local businesses, local queer collectives, softcore porn, and handmade calendars. All of that material provided me with ways to consider how a historic moment and time in general could be recorded. Local and personal histories are a part of a

larger recorded history. This is another topic that tends to permeate my work.



'Grids,' 2012.



Keegan's 'Sundays,' 2009.

ZK: In these photos, you're recording a day with an image, and the calendars are tracing time with images. It's interesting in this video with Eileen Quinlan at The Kitchen, you frame your dialogue (presented as a transcript), placing it in the context of current events.

MK: I see the video, *Teleplay*, as negotiating time in three parts. The first part is biography, the past that we experienced. Then the second part is thinking about how time is mapped, from the generic — the first time you get drunk, when you lose your virginity to when you get your first job. Then the third part is the contemporary, what's happening at the time of making the video both in our lives and in current events.

ZK: I know you will also have prenatal and restorative yoga classes as part of the exhibition on December 11th. Can I come to the restorative one?

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MK: Of course!

ZK: Do you have to bring your own yoga mat?

MK: No, I made custom yoga mats.

ZK: Design seems to feature prominently in all these shows.

MK: I joke with my color printer, that when I opened the *I Apple NY* at D'Amilio Terras that it was my coming out as a photographer show, slash my coming out as a graphic designer. Working with David Reinfurt to make the show's logo, interviewing Milton Glaser, both injected some serious design-related discussions. And, I continue to work with my mother's flashcards and her request to read images textually — there's design within that. One of the things that I find fascinating about my mother's collection of images — that I have been thinking about now for almost two years is the fact that she overrides their larger cultural reading. For example, in *N as in Nancy* I show her a photo of Martina Navratilova and she says "Martina Navratilova," but when I show her an image of Burt Reynolds she says "happy," because he's smiling.

ZK: Mmm, yeah.

MK: You could make a case, that, oh but, Burt Reynolds' identity overshadows the fact that he's smiling. I like this very productive misuse, as she's teaching people a new language.

ZK: I feel like the function of design is to tell you something, or tell you something fast, and with advertising to sell you something, or sell you something fast, but in your appropriation of the 'I HEART NY' logo I felt like there was a lot of misreading. I read what I thought it was going to be first, then had to backtrack. I don't know if it's the same with these images, it might be culturally specific, but either way people see based on what they've seen before.

MK: Yeah, and she sometimes used these flashcards to teach high school students but mainly implemented them to teach Central and South American adults during the evening. There's a lot of information to the cards, but they are designed objects, they are laminated images, they are intended for handling, there's aesthetic decisions made in terms of affixing certain images to fluorescent poster board or construction paper. There's very specific decisions in the way they are cut to remove text that she did not find relevant to her lesson. There's art direction going on.

ZK: Editing.

MK: Yes! I mean she's really creating, she's working with images that she thinks are good surrogates for the language lesson of that week and she's cutting them and mounting them so that they have a property like signage, and it's posited that there's a legibility. Also, as someone who's interested in the more amorphous space of history and how we can create archives, my mother's 400 double-sided flashcards create a strange portrait of the middle class and aspiring America of the 1990s. There was high employment and a surplus of money rooted in a Clinton era where there was a thriving middle class— it's an emphatically American collection.

ZK: The way these are edited reminds me of some of your earlier collages. Editing is not so different from cutting.

MK: I began working with photographs in making collages. I was interested in layering and combining different locations, people, and moments. For the photo-based work at *The Kitchen*, I've returned to collage techniques but these photo/painting hybrids are rooted in the plane of the wall and are on a much larger scale. That seems like a good place to end.



'Cornucopia,' 2012.

Matt Keegan and Eileen Quinlan's 'Y? O! G... A.' is on view through December 22 at *The Kitchen*, 512 West 19th Street, New York.

Matt Keegan

Visual Art Source, December 2011

Chérie Turner

Matt Keegan

Altman Siegel, San Francisco, California

Review by Chérie Turner

Visual Art Source, December 2011



Matt Keegan, "It Goes Without Saying," 2011, laser cut steel, 27 x 27"

In this show of new work, which runs the gamut from video, sculpture, metal wall pieces, silkscreens, a photo, a book, and custom curtains — there are a dozen pieces in all — New York-based conceptual artist, curator, and editor Matt Keegan expands on the readymade. Whereas readymades as we often think of them, a la Duchamp, are literally already-created objects, Keegan co-opts "readymade" words, letters, and images: well-used phrases and words (taken from his mother's ESL vocabulary flash cards), the alphabet, and stock images, which allows for a great deal of artistic license, especially where text is concerned: he must choose/create font, material, color, size, and so on. And he uses this freedom to great effect.

Several of the phrase-based works are of steel, the words laser-cut and repeated again and again. The repetition serves to visually reinforce the process of language learning and, for the non-learner/English only speaker, implores us to reconsider patterns of speech that are taken for granted and thereby lose any real impact — clichés are almost a non-language by virtue of their banality. One of these steel works that nicely utilizes materials to turn a too-oft-used-so-now-insincere break-up phrase on its head is "It's Not You It's Me." The self-reflecting phrase is cut out of a shiny, mirror-like piece of silver steel (repeatedly) thereby reflecting the viewer in the work. The work becomes accusatory, as though it is asking "what does saying this say about you?"

"No, No, No," into which the title word has been cut numerous times into a hexagon-shaped piece of steel, the visual effect of the rhythmically repetitive cutouts lends the work an almost three-dimensional or opt art feel. The rows of 'O's quickly vibrate in your field of vision — neutralizing or eschewing the meaning of the word in exchange for focusing on formal elements of pattern and design.

Pointing most obviously to Keegan's use of flash cards is the looped video, "'N' is for Nancy," which features a split screen. On one side is a woman from the shoulders up, stating words or phrases in English, with the Spanish translation at the bottom of the screen; the other side features a stock image of what the woman is describing. This highlights an implicit side-effect of language teaching: it imparts a particular way of life, a particular socioeconomic status, a hierarchy of what is important or relevant to know — that is, it says a lot about the culture associated with that language.

Perhaps the most poignant work is the 26 steel letters, blocky and roughly six inches high each, that comprise "How is an Alphabet a Mother?" It is certainly not a stretch to believe that Keegan's point here is to stimulate reflection on the power that these letters possess to give birth to an entire language, which itself has such a tremendous impact on personal identity, culture, worldview, and social interaction.

It is in his well-edited, pared-down simplicity that Keegan shines; his ability to take an idea, a phrase, a word, an image and tease out something greater. By keeping it simple, he invites us to consider his choices and how they resonate with us.

ARTFORUM

Matt Keegan

D'AMELIO TERRAS

Titling his recent exhibition for Milton Glaser's iconic I♥NY logo but replacing the original's stylized heart with a stylized apple, Matt Keegan framed the show as a tribute—albeit a periodically ambivalent one—to the city. In an interview that takes the place of a press release, Keegan grills the veteran designer about, among other things, his negotiation of the myriad changes that New York has undergone in the course of Glaser's lengthy career. The designer is philosophical, admitting that times are still tough for many, but finally sides with his hometown: "It's hard for me to imagine living in any other place. I would not do that by choice." A similar blend of criticism and affection, both characteristic of the insider, epitomizes Keegan's take.

The greater part of the show was occupied by groups of small color photographs attached with magnets to a band of thin, wall-mounted metal panels. These were painted in various "industrial" colors—the checklist names "George Washington Bridge Gray," "Munsell Gray," and more—while a selection of abstract metal sculptures that occupied odd areas of wall and floor were decorated in, to take two varieties, "Pulaski Red" and "Federal Blue." Even—in fact, especially—the bridge-and-tunnel brigade should make the connection. The photographs themselves depict moments from everyday life around town. Some of the locations—streets and storefronts around Chelsea—will be familiar to gallerygoers. Other scenes are harder to place but share a focus on the odd conjunctions of permanence and ephemerality that metropolitan life produces. The style is more or less indistinguishable from that of a hundred other urban shutterbugs—I overheard one skeptic deride it as "hipster Flickr"—but perhaps that's the point. These images may not always be extraordinary in and of themselves, but they work perfectly as documents of an extraordinary place in that they reflect its serendipitous character.

While at a quick glance the arrangement of the photos appears random, they turn out to have been assembled—albeit casually—according to visual and thematic connections. *Untitled (Group 1)* (all works 2011), for example, includes details of a Con Ed poster, a pair of rusted manhole covers, and a hard-hat worker in repose. Other pieces

group images of overstuffed bodegas, sliced-up subway ads, or close-ups of *The Panorama of the City of New York*, 1964, the periodically updated diorama installed permanently at the Queens Museum of Art. Added to this off-the-cuff frieze of Gotham observed was a limited-edition artist's book composed of images, based on a PBS series, cataloguing key moments in the city's physical and cultural expansion—here an engraving of Peter Minuit "purchasing" Manhattan from the Canarsie Indians for a handful of trinkets; there a Jane Jacobs obit—and a pair of curtains printed with a stack of books based on a reading list of books about cities.

Finally, in a nine-minute documentary video, *Biography/Biographer*, Keegan's father recounts his experience of meeting various heavy-hitting colleagues of Ed Moses when he was a teenage employee of the private North Hills Golf Course. Noting their craven deference to the influential and controversial developer, Keegan Senior conveys an admiration for the scale of Moses's accomplishment but ends up rounding on him for wielding individual power to a fundamentally undemocratic extent. It's a neat personal-political footnote to the extraordinary career recounted by Robert Caro in his 1975 biography of Moses, *The Power Broker*, dovetailing nicely with the younger Keegan's diverse vision of New York as an endlessly captivating mess of designs, compromises, and accidents good and bad.

—Michael Wilson



View of "Matt Keegan," 2011.

FlashArt

MATT KEEGAN

D'AMELIO TERRAS - NEW YORK



Above: MATT KEEGAN. Untitled (Group 4), 2011. 4 6" prints attached to sheet metal painted in George Washington Bridge Gray with spray-finished magnets. 122 x 244 cm. Right: MATT KEEGAN. "I Apple NY," 2011. Installation view at D'Amelio Terras, New York. Courtesy D'Amelio Terras, New York.

A cat inside a neighborhood bodega, a portrait of editor Alex Gartenfeld and a boy donning a yarmulke while playing chess in a city park. Arranged in groupings of four on 15 different pieces of sheet metal, Keegan's photographs are hung with simple magnets, welcomingly evoking the informality of an art school crit room. In combination with the sheet metal that wraps around the gallery's

walls are five sculptures made of the same material (with titles like *Untitled [Putaski Red]* or *Untitled [Federal Blue]*). Polished as "I Apple New York" appears, it avoids feeling over-designed or fatuous. Instead, it sharply brings up a conversation New Yorkers in general, and non-New Yorkers alike, love to discuss — the city and themselves in relation to it. Far from nostalgic or kitsch, these straightforward images record the assorted minutiae that comprise the city. They are less like the scenes in Zoë Leonard's ruminative "Analog" series or the paragon photographs of Weegee, and more akin to iPhone snapshots taken by sauntering denizens on indistinct street corners. Displayed on a pedestal is the text-less book *A History of New York* (2011), which begins with a speculative etching of Henry Hudson, the eponymous discoverer of the Hudson River, and ends with a stock photo of two women on the LCD display of a point-and-shoot camera. Aside from chronologically illustrating the events and figures that made the city both remarkable and lamentable, the book reminds us that images can construct a place's identity far

more than they actually can document it. In *Biography/Biographer* (2011), Keegan employs a familiar documentary video style as his father recalls a visit to a golf club he once worked at by the controversial urban planner Robert Moses, the man championed by some and vilified by others for shaping the metropolis as we know it today. "I Apple New York" doesn't try to present facts or critically focus on issues straining the city. Instead, it presents the impressions of one man in a city of millions; there is something that feels very genuine about Keegan's attempt.

Alexander Ferrando



Matt Keegan. D'Amelio Terras
Artforum, June 2011
Corrine Fitzpatrick

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

New York

Matt Keegan

D'AMELIO TERRAS
525 West 22nd Street, Ground Floor
April 23–June 18

A great amount of work—research and its resulting material objects—has been put into Matt Keegan's latest and meticulously thought out solo exhibition at D'Amelio Terras. With the cool remove of a cultural anthropologist and the pragmatic aesthetic of a designer, Keegan has amassed a visual archive—*cum*—love song to the city under the moniker "I [Apple] NY," which he created with David Reinfurt—a wink to the ubiquitous "I [Heart] NY" logo whose creator, Milton Glaser, is interviewed by the artist in lieu of a press release.

The main gallery can be experienced as a microcosm of the built environment; the perimeter offers a frieze of color photographs (snapped by Keegan throughout the five boroughs) attached to sheet metal panels painted—as are four of five freestanding sculptures—in the exact colors of New York City bridges. An aluminum mantelpiece reading *CIRCULATION* (all works 2011) converses with stacked posters designed by Jakob Kolding and copies of "A History of New York," an "unlimited edition" pictorial reader chronicling city history from Henry Hudson through 9/11 and, significantly, the death of Jane Jacobs.



View of "I Apple NY," 2011

The living city is never so neatly composed, and Keegan's reference-laden nested logic leaves little room for intuitive response. Until, that is, one stumbles upon *Biography/Biographer*, a nine-minute documentary looping in a disconnected room. The video provides a political-is-personal narrative entry point to the aggregate through the artist's father, Ed, who charmingly recollects his teenage employment at a private golf course frequented by Robert Moses, the "master builder" and czarlike visionary of midcentury urban renewal. Ed's storytelling offers historical context for the sociopolitical layers we move through today and pushes the motif of "the city" toward an imagined landscape, where the infrastructure of memory is as fundamental to urban experience as parkways and bridges. Referencing Robert Caro's 1974 book *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, the elder Keegan muses, "It wasn't just a biography; it was a part of my life."

– Corrine Fitzpatrick



THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: ART

MATT KEEGAN

May 23, 2011 page 16

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

MATT KEEGAN

This valentine to New York—the accompanying book contains a wonderful interview with Milton Glaser, of “I ♥ NY” fame—like the city itself, is a little all over the place. The gallery walls are lined with random photographs of the city: a white boy wearing a yarmulke playing chess against a black man in a hoodie; a view of a polluted waterway between Brooklyn and Queens; a futon left on a sidewalk; a cat inside a bodega. A wall-mounted metal sculpture reads “circulation” from two directions. The show is a portrait of a city in constant flux, both exasperating and enthralling. Through June 18. (D’Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)



Matt Keegan, "I Apple NY"



D'Amelio Terras, through June 18
(see Chelsea)

An aggregation of sculptures, photographs, texts, objects and printed material, Matt Keegan's composite portrait of New York City doubles as a reflection on art, society and power. In keeping with the artist's interest in community (Keegan was also a cofounder of North Drive Press, a now-defunct annual art publication that functioned as a showcase for emerging artists), many of the works in the show are collaborations with others.

An interview with Milton Glaser, designer of the I♥NY logo, takes the place of a press release for the exhibition. Keegan and David Reinfurt's variation on Glaser's design—featuring a cheerfully redundant apple instead of a heart—is emblazoned on the entrance to the gallery. A video features the artist's father, who reminisces about working, between the ages of 13 and 21, for a private golf club

frequented by Robert Moses—the controversial and fantastically powerful overseer of Gotham's mid-20th-century urban renewal.

The main part of the show, resembling a cross between a schoolroom and an exhibition of minimalist sculpture, is an array of the artist's own photographs of the city, mounted on sheet-metal panels—painted the colors of New York City bridges—running around the walls. Among the pictures of advertising signs, shabby apartment interiors and Con Edison trucks is a shot of dour Westbeth, the affordable housing complex for artists, with Julian Schnabel's hot-pink folly, Palazzo Chupi, rising behind it.

The show also features more metal panels bent into geometric sculptures, a set of curtains printed with images of book spines, a poem, a visual history of New York based on Ric Burns's eight-part PBS series *New York: A Documentary Film*, a sign and a poster. It's a busy exhibit, but appropriately so for a largely absorbing vision of the city as ever-shifting social space.
—Anne Doran



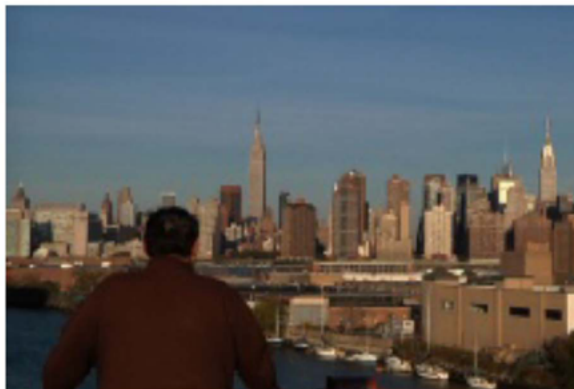
40 TIMEOUTNEWYORK.COM May 12-18, 2011

Art in America INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

Father Figure: Matt Keegan Takes on Robert Moses's New York

by Adam O'Reilly 05/10/11

In his third show at D'Amelio Terras in New York, Matt Keegan explores the iconography of New York. Take, for instance, the show's title, a collaboration with designer David Reinfurt, which replaces the "♥" in "I♥NY" with an apple—and not just any apple, but the logo for De Appel, the contemporary art center in Amsterdam. "I'm very interested in the space between language and photography or language and image, so I love the pause that this may generate for the viewer," Keegan told *A.i.A.* prior to the opening. The result is a statement that reads pictographically, "I Apple New York," and a set of hermetic references.



View Slideshow Still from Courtesy the artist and D'Amelio Terras.; Still from Courtesy the artist and D'Amelio Terras.;

Fifteen panels of sheet metal are mounted on three of the gallery's walls, creating an architectural wrap and mat. The colors on the monochrome sheets match those of the bridges that connect the boroughs of New York. On this standardized armature, Keegan scattered 60 photographs he took while walking the city—a meandering set of manhole covers, storefronts, streets, people and objects that are of personal interest and often surprising humor. A portrait of the New York subway ad celebrity, Dr. Zizmor, shows him posing for Keegan's camera. Nearby hang an image of an American Windsor chair in a white apartment, the ad on the back of a U-Haul truck and a nondescript brick wall. All are familiar but disorienting sights. Because of their relative anonymity, most could have been taken on any number of streets in New York's grid.

Not least because Keegan photographs manholes, this show invokes Lawrence Weiner's exploration of New York's urban terrain, *In direct line with another and the next* (2000). While the title suggests a grid structure, Weiner prints the text on 19 manhole covers scattered below Union Square, creating temporary public monuments of deliberately under-the-radar forms. The two projects are also linked by both artists' interest in revolutionary city planner Robert Moses, whose interventions into the city's public spaces radically re-determined them.

Keegan's 9-minute video, *Biography Biographer*, features the artist's father, who as a teenager worked as a caddy at Moses's golf club and worked closely with several of Moses's associates. Riffing on the documentary form made popular by PBS, Keegan's video presents a portrait of his father and New York as told through the layered understanding of Robert Moses as a highly contested city planner and architect of New York as we know it.

Keegan's 2008 artist book, *AMERICAMERICA*, accumulates multiple, inter-generational voices in the art world, all seeking an answer to the question "How did we get here?" This show directs that same question to New York, while focusing on social history, architecture, photography and sculpture. *Circulation*, a crinkled aluminum wall relief, hangs above the gallery's entrance portal, and can only be read when approached from an angle.

FOCUS

Matt Keegan

Questions historical, social and political: 'how did we get here?' by Naomi Fry

In the summer of 2007, the New York-based artist Matt Keegan embarked on a cross-country road trip. Along with two artist friends, Kenny Anderson and Erin Fetherman, Keegan was following in the footsteps of 'Hands Across America', a 1986 fundraiser in which millions formed a human chain – stretching from New York to California – as part of an effort to thwart homelessness. After he and his friends had made plaster casts of the hands of several mayors (and also some regular citizens) whose towns were located along the way, Keegan published a book, *AMERICAMERICA* (2008), which comprised a range of visual and written materials. Ephemera connected to the 'Hand Across America' fundraiser (as well as its retracing) were included, along with reproductions of art works made that year, newspaper clippings about the socio-political climate of the mid-1980s (the AIDS crisis, economic inequity), interviews with artists and activists, advertisements and tabloid covers. As Keegan explained in his introduction, the gathering of these elements sought to examine the following question: 'how did we get here?'

Though often dealing with historical, social and political questions, Keegan is rarely interested in creating a direct, easily graspable narrative with which to answer them. In this sense, *AMERICAMERICA* is a good starting point to discuss the artist's highly varied social-cum-materialist-cum-conceptual work. As in the road trip and the book, Keegan's approach is distinguished by a reliance on the collaborative and sociable aspects of art-making; a sampler-like sensibility towards cultural artefacts and an understanding of textuality, broadly, and print culture, specifically. It also demonstrates an attitude towards the socio-political sphere that is energetic and quirky, committed and coded.

With its elegantly restrained, often 'design-y' appearance, Keegan's work could be described as using a random didacticism (or, perhaps, didactic randomness). He asks his viewer to decipher the deceptively autonomous signs he provides and make something of them. For his 2009 solo show at Altman Siegel Gallery, San Francisco, for instance, Keegan exhibited a range of photographs and objects which, apart from their shared connection to some form of timekeeping, appeared cryptic, almost pointedly so. A photograph of the artist, his face obscured by the front page of *The New York Times*, offered no initial clues (*March 17, 2009*); another, of a re-photographed calendar produced by Smith News Corp – the first magazine distributorship in northern California – bearing a pretty, generic image of a San Francisco street is equally enigmatic (*May, 2009*, both 2009). But when considering these pieces alongside several others in the space (a piece of sheetrock leaning against the wall, etched with the days of the week; calendars from the 1950s to 1990s on loan from the San Francisco GLBT Historical Society archive; a photograph of a handsome young man in profile, with the word 'Tuesdays' looged on his sunglasses), they slowly became a form of language, a way to communicate the experience of a particular time spent at a particular place – in this case, the artist's own stay in the Bay Area – and, following this, actively engage with that area's historical, political and social terrain.

'Milton Glaser', the title of Keegan's current solo show, at D'Amelio Terras gallery, New York, is accompanied by an altered rendering of the legendary graphic designer's I ♥ NY logo (in which the heart is replaced by an apple – a collaboration with David Reinfurt). This appropriation and tweaking could perhaps be understood as a skeptical critique of popular design, but Keegan's long, admiring interview with the

Below left:
March 17, 2009
2009
Mounted digital
c-type print
96×76 cm

Below middle:
A History of New York
2011
Page from the
artist's book
24×19×3 cm

Opposite page:
I Apple NY
Logo designed by
David Reinfurt, Apple
illustration supplied by
Will Holder for de Appel
Arts Centre, Amsterdam
2011
Electronic file

Below right:
Untitled (Group 6)
2011
One of four c-type prints
20×25 cm

modest Glaser, which serves as the show's press release, signals otherwise. What splits the difference here is Keegan's appreciation of Glaser's graphic language as a way of both binding a community as well as interpreting it. In the show, the artist similarly shares his own visual enthusiasms, which are all connected in some way to New York, and are expressed in various way – from a video of the artist's father speaking of his days as a caddy on urban developer Robert Moses' private golf course (*Biography/Biographer*), to a visuals-only publication (*A History of New York*, both 2011) which loosely follows the nearly 400-year history of the city as it is laid out in filmmaker Ric Burns' US public television series, *New York: A Documentary Film* (1999).

Employing a range of media, the exhibition moves fluidly between the historical and the personal. The walls of the gallery's front room are lined with 15 consecutive sheets of metal (painted in what turn out to be the eight official colours used in New York City's bridges), on which Keegan has placed a series of 60 photographs, four to a sheet, taken on his walks around the city's boroughs: *Untitled (Group 1)* and *Untitled (Group 15)* (both 2011). The work prizes visual flow over narrative: two pictures of manhole covers are followed by an image of two men, viewed from the back as they walk down the street wearing nearly identical black jackets, caps and jeans; a photograph of three wild-haired poodles held aloft is followed by a picture of a beard trimmer still in its grotty box, and so on. In these photos we have, on the one hand, a classic example of a Sausserian sequence in which meaning is determined by difference; what we also encounter here, though, is a reminder that once that difference is brought to light, we should begin to pay attention to how these particular parts form a larger collective meaning. As Glaser suggests in the show's press release, in response to Keegan's question about the work of his teacher Giorgio Morandi: 'when you regard it with some attention, you discover that the range is fantastic. The modesty of the paintings and their lack of drama keep you from noticing at first. Later you feel changed by the experience, and you no longer look at the world the same way.'

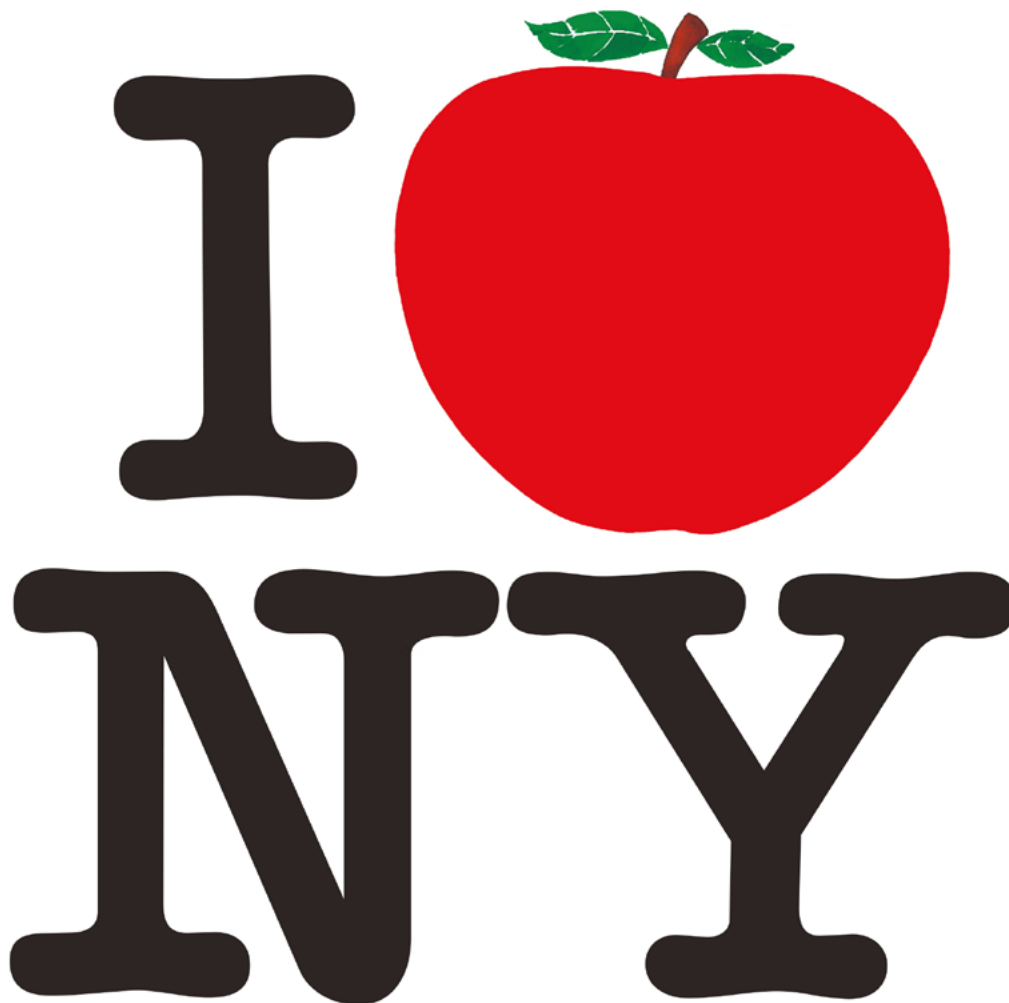


Matt Keegan. Questions historical, social and political: 'how did we get here?'

Frieze, May 2011

Naomi Fry

FOCUS



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Lost in Translation: Do you see what I read?

MAP, Winter 2010

Matt Keegan

Lost in Translation: Do you see what I read?

by Matt Keegan

I recently visited Melbourne, Australia, for a two-person show with Dane Mitchell. At customs, an officer inspected my luggage and a cardboard parcel that contained framed photographs that I was couriering to the exhibition. 'What's in here?' he asked. 'Framed photos,' I replied. 'Are they timber?' he inquired about the frames. 'Yes, they are wood,' I said. Clearing customs, I thought about 'timber' and how the word elicits an image of a tree (in this case, maple) being cut down and milled to make frame profiles. Timber is both material and manufacture in one word. Wood, on the other hand, becomes generic—without a lineage, and static. Always wood—before and after.



The accuracy of this word choice triggered the memory of my favourite language anecdote, relayed by my friend Sean who studied abroad in Japan. Early into his semester Sean was at an informal school get together, talking to a Japanese classmate. After some initial banter Sean asked, 'so, do you like to dance?' To which his new friend replied, 'my technology of the disco is ugly.' How could anyone say 'I'm a bad dancer' ever again?



My mother teaches English as a second language (ESL), and between the early 1990s and early 2000s she gave ESL evening classes to adults in suburban Long Island, New York. To facilitate teaching, she created image-based flash cards for her lessons. Hand-assembled from magazines, newspapers and other print media, her selections mainly draw from stock and advertorial photos traditionally used to sell commercial products. My mother repurposed these reproductions to illustrate words and concepts related to her weekly language course.

Making work for *Image Transfer*, a group show currently installed at the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, I decided to revisit my mother's flash cards as source material. Her teaching archive is stored in a closet in her home and, going through her collection, I was surprised by the quantity of images that she had amassed—approximately 400 double-sided cards gathered over a decade. As I went through each laminated sheet, I immediately found this compilation to be compelling for a variety of reasons: first and foremost, her chosen photos are a fascinating yet perplexing utility as language learning aids.

47 Artist Text: Matt Keegan



Will Holder reconfigured the design and visual identity of Dutch art institution de Appel. An artist engaged with language and editing, Holder appropriated the foundational learning phrase 'A is for Apple', reusing the institutions original logo from 1975. On the venue's website (www.deappel.nl) and its exhibition ephemera, the 'A' usually appears in the upper left-hand corner, and an illustration of an apple resides right of centre, claiming most of the page. I am not a semiotician, and I do not believe in universalist concepts, yet this basic correlation appears to have near-global legibility. A is for apple. Apple is A. The two are interchangeable.



Within my mother's flash card collection, there are examples that trigger an obvious word correlation, but such clear and concise translation makes up only a small percentage of her sizeable set. Finding image-word equivalents is not easy. The role that subjectivity plays in both translation and interpretation quickly becomes apparent. Each card points to the lack of immediate legibility, and thus the complexity, that her collection attempts to stage. Here are some examples of photographs that should elicit an immediate word correlative:



The vast majority of her picture cards are unable to succinctly invoke more complex and diverse words and phrases. The absurdity of finding a photo to illustrate the verb 'grooming', for example, is an endlessly intriguing image-language exercise. What my mother has chosen is just as valid as any other related image that could depict 'grooming'. As a language tool, perhaps it is more productive that this reproduction calls to mind other possibilities that could (and would) also make sense as visual companions. Brainstorming a more accurate image would require students to apply their comprehension of the learned concept into visual terms. Such a generative activity could eventually formulate a compelling visual lexicon.

48



If my mother used a photo of a smiling Burt Reynolds to identify the adjective 'happy', what would the image be for 'actor', or 'masculine', or 'moustache'? The Marlborough Man also makes his way into my mother's archive, but is used to either illustrate the concept of 'cowboy' or 'smoker'. Identities become secondary, replaced with a demand for a basic way of looking that attempts to literalise what the camera presents to us. This way of indexing images is aligned with the functionality of stock photography, a genre that determines categories even before the shutter is released.

Companies that purchase stock photographs enliven them with a specific context. The marketing copy that accompanies an advertisement helps to frame the stock image, whether of a staged family, couple, or styled objects. Interestingly, my mother removed the text that accompanied her carefully selected advertorial photos—her word application determined the scenario. She was both art director and copy editor. For that week's language lesson, Burt Reynolds was 'happy', because she said so.



My mother made her flash cards to teach predominantly Central and South American immigrants. The image-language collection is emphatically American and it is representative of middle-class aspiration and consumption—traits that were relevant to the desires of the members of her class. My mother's students were employed as poorly-compensated day labourers and food service staff. The development of more proficient language skills would benefit them, but also help them participate in the education of their children or other younger family members.



In the next ten years, Spanish-speaking residents are expected to make up the majority of the population in the United States. This may even result in the US becoming a bi-lingual country. If such a shift were to happen, how could these flash cards be used? Can Burt Reynolds also be *feliz*? I've been told that in the UK, socio-economic standing can be deciphered through the way someone speaks. There is not such a clear way to interpret class within the States. There is, however, strong opinion of who speaks 'proper' Spanish. My Cuban maternal grandmother would voice her disdain for the way New York-based Puerto Ricans and Dominicans spoke her native tongue. How could such a varied engagement with a language be mainstreamed into the shared space of the classroom? Could culturally specific readings and word choice also eventually facilitate a dictionary of possible image-language translations? Again, these cards begin to overflow with possible definitions.

49 Artist Text: Matt Keegan



Although it was not her intention, my mother's archive generated a peculiar and particular snapshot of the cultural moment of the 1990s. With the recent US midterm elections, Democratic and Republican candidates belaboured the rhetoric of 'championing the working class'. Ageing somewhere between 10 and 20 years old, these middle-class attuned images cast a light on the dramatic decline of this representative constituency that maintained stability during the Clinton years (cue images of saxophones, cigars, free trade and memories of financial potency). The cropped and hand-cut photos capture a cultural moment that is frozen within their laminate. In keeping with their perplexing utility as a language-learning tool, the images also present an equally provocative and perverse record of a decade's mediated dreams and desires. Whether requesting a student or museum viewer to engage this set to elicit memory or meaning, this collection proposes endless speculation. Such basic looking becomes quite complex, and what you see requires endless permutation to determine what you may get.

That is that. *Eso si que es.*



Matt Keegan is an artist based in New York

Image Transfer: Pictures in a Remix Culture,
Henry Art Gallery, Washington,
2 October – 23 January



2009 in Review: Gallery Exhibitions

Published: December 29, 2009

Matt Keegan "New Windows" at D'Amelio Terras, February 28 – April 25, 2009

Visitors to Matt Keegan's "New Windows" at D'Amelio Terras were greeted by an awkwardly placed tall vertical slab of drywall looking like the remnants of a partially constructed wall. The barrier bore phrases from the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*, in which Kevin Costner's character is haunted by a voice saying "If you build it, they will come." Matt Keegan did indeed "build it" for his exhibition, which tackled ideas of construction and deconstruction, memory, and interior versus exterior space. Six photo collages collectively titled *New Windows* featured images taken in Keegan's apartment as his super repaired a window. He altered the photos to change the location of the tools in the room and position the figure both inside and outside of the window he's repairing. Other interventions into space manifested themselves in the form of a hole cut into the gallery's wall and revealing a photograph of the sun coming through foliage and an aluminum-mounted picture of the artist's cat Neptune unassumingly resting on the floor. Done by anyone else, Keegan's conceptual logic may have seemed heavy-handed and dry, but given his playful yet considered choices it was the perfect balance of conceptual grounding and whimsical intervention. —AMBER VILAS

Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan

Pixel Vision, May 7, 2009

Johnny Ray Huston



■ Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan

Posted by Johnny Ray Huston on May 07, 2009

Barack Obama boarding an Air Force One plane for the first time. Gay calendars from the 1960s. A *New York Times* article on the death of a major urban newspaper. Sundays at the Alemany Flea Market. These are some of the temporal markers at play in Matt Keegan's exhibition "Postcards & Calendars." The show (reviewed in the current *Guardian*) could be Keegan's postcard to New York about time spent in San Francisco. It's also an exploration of the ways in which calendars and other time keepers can be used subversively to convey forms of experience or forge communities. Keegan is no stranger to the such endeavors: his 2008 book *AMERICAMERICA* (Printed Matter, 140 pages, \$35) gathers interviews, old *People* magazines, memorabilia connected to the "Hands Across America" project, artifacts from his small-scale update of that endeavor, and unorthodox archival material into a journal that doubles as a portrait of the Reagan era. The artist and I recently sat at a petite lemon yellow table with pretty lemon yellow flowers in Altman Siegel Gallery to discuss his current exhibition.



View of Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars." All images from "Postcards & Calendars" courtesy of Altman Siegel Gallery

Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan

Pixel Vision, May 7, 2009

Johnny Ray Huston

SFBG *Many shows repeat the same execution of a single theme, over and over. In contrast, "Postcards & Calendars" has many forms and facets.*

Matt Keegan The thematic of this show is definitely influenced by my time in in San Francisco, but not relegated to being here. Lots of things at play are continuations of my preexisting engagement with photography. In terms of local influences, the calendars from the GLBT Historical Society had a tremendous impact on this show. Before I met with Rebekah Kim, the Historical Society's archivist, I was trying to figure out how to map the ways time is not only recorded but visually structured -- to think about such rudimentary things as a planner, or a calendar, or a newspaper, in terms of how days and months can be iterated. When I saw their collection of calendars, part of the power of those objects comes from the way they integrate a social history into an innocuous form. Also, some of the calendars that have a clear porn element, also have a social element. For example, *Fizeek* from the mid-'60s -- the back of that calendar has notations about who shot which photo and where the photographers are based, which provides it with this added level of social exchange.



Matt Keegan

SFBG *In the past year I've amassed a stack of the 1970s SF gay magazine Vector, so it was serendipity to come across a calendar from Vector on the wall in your show. More than with microfiche of local newspapers, I get a sense of what was going on in San Francisco at the time from a publication such as that magazine, simply through the addresses in advertisements.*

MK Material that might be considered insubstantial or peripheral in terms of formal archiving and recording has a historical implication. Close to the time when I met with Rebekah, I met with Gerard Koskovich, one of the founding members of the GLBT Historical Society. He told this amazing anecdote about Bois Burke placing an ad in *The Hobby Directory* that is significant in helping to understand a 1940s and '50s queer history of correspondence. Within this guide, people would reach out about hobbies such as nude sunbathing and physique photography. I am very interested in the various ways that such print-based and distributed publications were activated to serve unintended purposes. And, I love the way that the calendars, specifically,

Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan

Pixel Vision, May 7, 2009

Johnny Ray Huston

embed such a social history so that it becomes part of daily and monthly activities.

Barack Obama, 31 shades of white, newspapers as endangered species, the archivist's life, the art of interviewing, and more, after the jump

SFBG *It makes sense to me that Colter Jacobsen is involved in "Postcards & Calendars," because I see kinship between some of your art in the show and his "memory drawings."*

MK I saw Colter's contribution to the ["Exhibition Formerly Known as"] "Passengers" show [at CCA Wattis Institute], and I loved those drawings. I'd known some of his work before. We met shortly thereafter through a mutual friend, Matt Wolf, who is from San Jose. I approached Colter to ask if he'd consider turning his drawings for the "Passengers" show into a calendar, and it was a perfect situation -- he said the Wattis had discussed doing just that, but it didn't get to happen. We started working together to make the poster calendar, and when I named the show "Postcards & Calendars," he then told me that his images had emanated from a postcard.

SFBG *For "Postcards & Calendars," Altman Siegel's walls are painted 31 shades of white. How did the idea of painting the gallery's walls come about?*

MK That was the first idea I had for the show. Before I was certain about what I was going to exhibit, I wanted to address all the newness that was happening: Claudia's [Altman-Siegel's] gallery being a new space; that my show was connected to living in this city for the first time; and, on a much larger scale, the first 100 days of the Obama administration. I needed to address the new administration, and I thought painting the walls would be a nice way to physically map time. Also, with the subtle gradation, and because of the amazing windows, I think the majority of people who visit the gallery don't even notice. It's contingent on the time of day -- in the late afternoon you can see the differentiation more clearly. Originally, I thought I'd like to paint the gallery in 120 shades [of white], reflecting the 100 days plus the first 20 before he was inaugurated. I'm glad I didn't pursue that -- they might still be painting the gallery today.



From Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars"

Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan
Pixel Vision, May 7, 2009
Johnny Ray Huston

SFBG *The most evocative and in some ways enigmatic aspect of "Postcards & Calendars" might be the series of 31 untitled images along one wall in the room that also displays the calendars. Can you explain the process that went into creating those images?*

MK I knew I wanted to take a lot of photographs while I was here in the Bay Area, so I used a 35mm point-and-shoot camera to take snapshots. I knew I wanted to do something with them, and for a while thought they might generate a small-edition Xerox book. But then I decided I wanted to make tracings of the photos. The way that they are made, the 4 inch by 6 inch prints are traced, using graphite on tracing paper. Then they are scanned, inverted, outputted on acetate, and the acetate is put on photo paper to make a contact print. After a tracing was generated from the Obama newspaper piece [in "Postcards & Calendars"], I was interested in the meticulous revisiting of such an image. For the Obama piece, it didn't make sense to turn the tracing into a photo, I wanted the tracing to be documented. But for the series of smaller images, I didn't want the graphite rendering to be their final phase -- when they were inverted and then output to make contact prints, they almost became etchings. In relationship to the newspaper and old modes of imaging, that made sense to me. They felt precious, but also because of their size and sheen, they have the look of mass-produced, offset printed postcards. All of those aspects are synthesized in the way they are made.

SFBG *Of course I have to ask you about using newspapers as material.*

MK The dying form!

SFBG *In a gallery next door to Altman Siegel, last year an artist did a series of New York Times-related pieces in which she sewed through select parts or pages of the paper. How did you choose the particular front page you photographed?*

MK I knew the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* was going to run its final print edition, so I chose the *Times* that ran the cover story about its last run. Because I'm from New York, it seems like such an impossibility for the *New York Times* to no longer physically exist -- exist in print.

SFBG *Do you have a strong connection to or fascination with these things -- postcards, calendars, newspapers -- that dates back to childhood?*

MK I am 33, and I'm part of that last generation which was not indoctrinated at an early age into the digital. I did not use a computer on a regular basis until college, I didn't know what email was until college, and I didn't actively use it until after college. I feel very connected to a zine tradition, though I didn't actively participate in it.

Shades of time: Q&A with Matt Keegan

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From Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars"

SFBG *I came out of that tradition. The writing of letters was central to it, and I remember the period in the mid-'90s when correspondence changed to email, and it utterly changed the ways in which relationships functioned -- or were made manifest, or not -- in those indie and zine communities. I generally don't print out emails unless they need them for reference. Yet I know people who write emails that could be excellent letters -- they treat it as an epistolary form.*

MK But to what end? I had an opportunity to interview Susan Goldstein, and talk with her about what it entails to be the archivist [at the San Francisco Public Library] for the city -- in particular, what it's like to be at this critical juncture of translation from physical to digital. What gets lost? I'm not interested in any of the work being viewed or discussed through a nostalgic filter. I'm not nostalgic about any of these changes, but do find their physical form to be completely interesting and rich in historical value. Correspondence is obviously a component of my show's nod to postcards. It's a basic form: you have the date, the location, the sender, and the recipient. All of that information is compelling, before you even engage with the content of the correspondence. If you lose the newspaper, or postcards, or calendars, there's a displacement of the basic record of your day-to-day or month-to-month existence. Also, I'm here as a visiting artist at CCA [California College of the Arts], and in the photo department. You can't talk about photography without talking about the transition to the digital. There's a ton of writing in recent years about what gets lost with the absence of the physical aspect of photography. The larger archival conversations are really interesting to me. I co-founded a project called North Drive Press, an artists' run project and annual arts publication that features artist-to-artist interviews and multiples made by mainly emerging artists. I've been working on that since 2003, and the first issue came out in 2004.

SFBG *Does that have any connection to your Printed Matter book AMERICAMERICA?*

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MK They're separate but they both prioritize interviews, and the Printed Matter book highlights periodicals. There are definitely some parallels between them.



Cover of Matt Keegan's *AMERICAMERICA*

SFBG *The pieces in "Postcards & Calendars" where color photography is foregrounded in some cases seem more overtly autobiographical, or examples of a personal record of your time here. Is that right?*

MK I would say the color C-prints purport to be a document of January, of February, and so on. But when you look at them, that isn't the case. There is no way to make an image that is January or an image that is February. Or, applying that similar logic, to create an image of a Tuesday, or a Sunday. The smaller black-and-white photographs aren't personal, but they're contingent on my experience as the person who took the original photos. Some of them are of friends, but the tracing and the scanning and the output hopefully removes it from the space of a personal snapshot.

SFBG *Your focus on interviews in a project such as "Postcards & Calendars" and AMERICAMERICA definitely has some connection to the work Matt [Wolf] did in Wild Combination, his documentary about Arthur Russell. One of the things that distinguishes his movie from the many music documentaries of recent years is the power of the interviews that he does with Russell's parents and boyfriend.*

MK The parents, especially. Of course they were so funny and relaxed with Matt, because he's so good at interviewing. I hope that we will work on something together -- I think it would be fun.

SFBG I do think there is a bit of a generational movement of sorts -- a bracket of artists who are drawn towards historical and research-based work, after a gap in which recent history wasn't discussed. I talked about this with Lypsinka a year or two ago, and she was saying that in the wake of AIDS, that kind of discourse was devastated, and perhaps it required a younger generation to look back.

MK When I was an undergraduate [at Carnegie-Mellon], the work I was looking at and being exposed to was from the '90s. Group Material, Fred Wilson, reading Coco Fusco, looking at

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Andrea Fraser, I studied with Steve Kurtz, I studied with Faith Wilding. My complete understanding or artmaking was through a filter that art and social history were not separate -- that you could not make work without thinking about a particular sociopolitical context.



From Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars"

SFBG *Did the way in which you used the GLBT Historical Society aspects of the show add something to how the people at the GLBT view those materials?*

MK When Rebekah, who is relatively new to the Historical Society, was at the opening, she said that when she was going through the calendars she realized how varied and interesting they all are. There have been a lot of different -- moving, not fixed -- responses to the calendars. People don't look at the calendars and only think about AIDS, or look at them and only think about protest. I tried to curate the selection of calendars so you couldn't be reductive.

SFBG *Would you say your time in San Francisco has influenced you?*

MK I've lived in New York for over ten years, so I can't answer that without saying that to me, a big part of being here is [taking] a break from New York. I've had amazing conversations with Rick Prelinger, with Chris Carlsson, with Susan Goldstein, with Gerard, and Rebekah -- they make me want to seek out those types of conversations when I return to New York. I can't look at New York as a tourist, but I'm eager to look at it in a different way.

Time passages

The San Francisco Bay Guardian, May 6-12, 2009

Johnny Ray Huston

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN VISUAL ART

visual art

Time is the essence of Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars." It gives many forms to a native New Yorker's recent memories of life in San Francisco and explores the City's history, while also contemplating the death of newsprint and vanishing of non-digital keepsakes.

EXHIBITION VIEWS FROM "POSTCARDS & CALENDARS" COURTESY OF ALTMAN SIEGEL GALLERY



Time passages

Matt Keegan gives from to his and SF's past in "Postcards & Calendars"

By Johnny Ray Huston
johnny@sfbg.com

The past is vanishing, more than ever before. Or so it seems, as so many temporal placeholders — including the newspaper you might be holding in your hands right now — give way to digital facsimiles. This quandary is a morphing source of inspiration for "Postcards & Calendars," a solo show by the New York artist and temporary San Francisco resident Matt Keegan, who is about to complete a teaching stint at California College of the Arts.

While Keegan engages a consistently time-based theme throughout "Postcards and Calendars," he does so via refreshingly varied forms and motifs. He's dedicatedly studious enough to turn a trip to the GLBT Historical Society into an semi-installation, yet easygoing enough to use sexual-

ly-charged archival pieces as material, spontaneous enough to try out something different with each piece in his overall show, subversive (or formally perverse) enough to digitally photograph newspapers, and irreverent enough to break his own rules regarding what constitutes a record of daily life.

Keegan first stung my eyes and queer spirit with a piece from the Altman Siegel Gallery's inaugural group show. It visually manifested the infinite recess of a ex-romantic relationship in a manner that interspersed teasing hints of still-extant attraction with a palpable sense of emotional loss. All of these aspects brought the "memory drawings" of San Francisco artist Colter Jacobsen to mind, so it's only fitting that Jacobsen contributes a booklet to "Postcards & Calendars" that plays off of Keegan's theme. In fact, one can draw further connections between Keegan, Jacobsen, and the NYC filmmaker Matt Wolf — three artists of roughly the same generation who share similar queer historical imperatives while allowing humor, traces of casual lust or

longing and even some lovelorn aspects into their art. Keegan's book *AMERICAMERICA* (Printed Matter, 140 pages, 2008), an exploration of national identity through the Reagan era's "Hands Across America" phenomenon, possesses enjoyable parallels to Wolf's films about the late David Wojnarowicz and Arthur Russell, and Jacobsen's arrangements of trinkets and trash into expressions that find meaning or power in degradability.

"Postcards & Calendars" is a direct array of works, often candid, and at times (in the case of the gay calendars from the 1970s) full-frontal. But the show's lingering strength comes from more elliptical gestures, such as a wall of personal imagery that Keegan has rendered more enigmatic and evocative through an unconventional series of drawing and photo processes. In fact, to tap into the depth of what Keegan does here, you need to look closely at the walls themselves, where you might discover 31 passages of time. **www**

MATT KEEGAN:
POSTCARDS & CALENDARS
Through May 23
Altman Siegel Gallery
49 Geary, fourth floor, SF
(415) 576-9300
www.altmansiegel.com

NEW ART AND STYLE ON GEARY: LOCAL LOOKS AND VIEWS ABROAD

With a calm demeanor and a pulled-together, no-nonsense appearance, Claudia Altman-Siegel isn't an obvious suspect when it comes to identifying the driving force behind a conceptual art show that draws well-heeled European tourists and people clad in Converse shoes and skinny jeans. Both types, and more, are drawn to Matt Keegan's "Postcards & Calendars," where they're confronted by an eight-foot list of days of the week and a larger-than-life photograph of a *New York Times* reader hidden behind dismal headlines.

The four month-old Altman Siegel Gallery is set apart from neighboring galleries by its inclusion of a window, a trait that trades art hermeticism for the possibility of sunshine. Street noise is present but not disruptive — a reminder that another world exists beyond the space's light cocoon of images and ideas. It has a distinctively different aura from the other galleries in the 49 Geary St. building, something Altman-Siegel says she is "sort of blind to."

After 10 years of work in New York City, Altman-Siegel slipped over to San Francisco to fill a gap in the West Coast gallery scene, bringing emerging local and internationally established artists who are still early on the trajectory to significance in the art canon.

Local art or specificity is prominent in Altman-Siegel's curatorial work to date. The current show, though by a New York artist, includes sketches of familiar San Francisco street corners. Bay Area artist Trevor Paglen's surreal cosmic photographs were the focus of the gallery's first solo show.

Across the street, mannequins wearing teal trousers topped by black, multipocketed jackets and craftily reconstructed vintage dresses stand defiantly among an installation of birch tree branches and rusted machinery. A former STA travel office has been transformed into Shotwell, a cutting-edge update of a funky Aunt Edna boutique.

Newlyweds Michael and Holly Weaver needed somewhere to hawk their extensive collection of vintage clothes. When they landed a lease at 36 Geary St., the shop expanded to fuse groundbreaking European fashion and clothes by Bay Area designers. Denim from local menswear line B.Son is paired with chic shirts by Parisian collective Surface2Air. Shape-shifting square dresses from the San Francisco duo Please Dress Up! hang alongside bold separates by British label Scout. On the other side of Silverman Gallery's recent move to Sutter Street, the openings of Shotwell and Altman-Siegel suggest that something new and bold is creeping up on Union Square. **(Laura Peach)**

MORE AT SFBG.COM

Pixel Vision blog:
Interviews with
Matt Keegan and the
owners of Shotwell

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"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

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FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2009

WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

C21

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2009



CHESTER HUGGINS JR./THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Generational: Younger Than Jesus Foreground, "This Is Lucy," a live performance piece by Chu Yun, and on the wall, photographs by Cao Fei, part of an exhibition at the New Museum of works by artists 33 and under.

Young Artists, Caught in the Act

The sweet bird of youth, alert as a robin, hungry as a gull, alights once again in Manhattan with the inauguration of "The Generational: Younger Than Jesus" at the New Museum, the latest local survey of contemporary art — this one a triennial — to challenge the pre-eminence of the Whitney Biennial.

**HOLLAND
COTTER**
ART
REVIEW

The show is large, buzzy, international in scope and age-specific. As the title implies, only artists 33 or younger were considered for inclusion, a restriction that could be ruled age-ist in a

court of law, but it's business as usual for a museum ever conscious of its clientele.

Big-statement surveys generate big expectations: they will tell us what and who is hot, important, exciting. What we get in this case is a serious, carefully considered show, but one that, apart from a few magnetic stand-alone entries — a killer video by Cyprien Gaillard, an animation by Wojciech Bakowski, a madcap Ryan Trecartin installation — feels awfully sedate and buttoned-down for a youthfest. Kids R Us it ain't, but that's O.K.

Youthfulness doesn't carry quite the cachet in

the art world that it did a decade or so ago. The routine of dealers hustling talent straight from the classroom has made exhibitions of 20-somethings the wearying norm. Nor does "international" have much glamour any more. Art fairs have seen to that.

So it's no surprise to find that, even with the introduction of some new names, "Younger Than Jesus" feels familiar, like a more-substantial-than-average version of a weekend gallery hop in Chelsea and the Lower East Side, right down to the token Asian and African imports.

The show was put together very fast; in a year. The initial selection was done Facebook-style, with the curatorial groundwork outsourced to 150 art world experts — artists, critics and teachers — who submitted names of artists for consideration. Three New Museum curators — Lauren Cornell, Massimiliano Gioni and Laura Hoptman — made the final cut of the 50 artists, with the critic Brian Sholis assigned to create a resource center to supplement the show. (It's on the museum's fifth floor.

Continued on Page 24

Young Artists, Caught In the Act

From Weekend Page 21

and well worth a visit.) Most international surveys are assembled this way. The positive difference in this case is that all the sources are credited by name, and the runner-up artists — nearly 500 — are included in a book called “Younger Than Jesus: Artist Directory,” a kind of exhibition in print, and a terrific idea.

The exhibition catalog is also a compendium, mostly of musings from the popular press on Generation Y, or the Millennials, with each curator contributing necessarily impressionistic profiles of a generation still very much in formation.

Characteristics assigned to these artists include having a second-nature relationship to digital media; a preference for sentiment over irony; an aesthetic interest in reorganizing existing materials rather than trying to invent from scratch; and so on.

A brief glance at the show makes one thing clear: most of its participants are committed multitaskers. The artists Tala Madani, born in Iran, and Jakub Julian Ziolkowski, from Poland, do oil-on-canvas pictures of a conventional sort; Emre Hüner, from Turkey, combines painting with animation; the German-born artist Kerstin Brätsch uses hers as

Multitaskers, storytellers and blogosphere babies span various mediums.

performance aids; and the New York artist Josh Smith treats his like prints, churning out dozens of pictures at a time and stacking them for distribution. Ryan Trecartin uses paint cosmetically, as an extreme form of makeup. Applying it directly to the body, he transforms himself and the other performers in his videos into frenetically walking, talking surrealist abstractions. Born in Texas in 1981, Mr. Trecartin is probably the best-known artist in the show, though with his extroverted, look-at-me spirit, among the least representative.

He's certainly one of the most versatile. A blogosphere baby, a child of the chat room, a YouTube native, he shifts effortlessly among realities while pushing sculpture, film, performance, music and language — so much language — through digital scramblers and mixers. There is some danger of his motormouth wizardry sliding into shtick, but right now it's mesmerizing.

Some of the more interesting pieces in the show share its hyped-up mode. A rapid-fire video by the Armenian artist Tigran Khachatryan alternates scenes from Sergei Eisenstein's “Battleship Potemkin” and clips of skateboard catapaults to rethink the concept of revolution. A short, impressive film by the Israeli artist Keren Cyter has characters spitting out malign non sequiturs in the quick, jerky sequences.

“The Generational: Younger Than Jesus” remains through June 14 at the New Museum, 235 Bowery, at Prince Street, Lower East Side; (212) 219-1222 or newmuseum.org



Liz Glynn's installation “The 24 Hour Roman Reconstruction Project” before it was destroyed. A video of the project is part of the New Museum triennial.



Part of an installation by Ryan Trecartin at the New Museum.

In a live audiotaped performance, the British artist Tris Vonna-Michell begins telling a story at a leisurely pace, then gradually accelerates the delivery until the words turn into a coloratura stream of leaps and repeats, all the while holding the narrative thread. The burst of applause that greets him at the end is fully earned.

The show has a generous amount of performance, some of it, as in that case, recorded. Two male models in space-age bikinis wordlessly rearrange chunks of black abstract sculpture in a film by the Polish artist Anna Molka. In a video by the British artist James Richards, a speech instructor delivers a soundless lesson in lip reading.

Live performance has a particular chic at present, and the show has some of that too. The most spectacular example, Liz Glynn's “24 Hour Roman Reconstruction Project, or, Building Rome in a Day,” came and went before the opening. With a team of collaborators and a ton of cardboard, this American artist erected a model of the Eternal City in the museum's lobby, then destroyed it.

in one dusk-to-dusk marathon. A video of the whole process is on view.

Two other performances are continuing and almost invisible. The Chinese artist Chu Yun has hired women to sleep, one at a time and with the aid of medication, on a bed in the center of a gallery for the run of the show. The British conceptualist Ryan Gander has asked that whatever museum guard is on duty in the museum's fourth-floor gallery wear a white Adidas track suit marked with embroidered spots of blood, fake evidence of a story of violence that we can invent.

The Millennials appear to be a story-loving breed. There are lots of narratives, implied or spelled out. There is Mr. Vonna-Michell's, of course, and the scripted but inscrutable emergencies in Mr. Trecartin's videos. Katerina Seda, a Czech artist, filmed her depression-crippled grandmother making drawings of household items, thereby regaining an interest in life. Both the film and the drawings are on view, crucial components of a family drama.

Through collages of newspaper and

magazine clips, the artist Matt Keegan documents the tangled politics of the America he grew up in as a child in the 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan and AIDS shared the news. With the wise omniscience that marks much of his work, he seems to be asking how we keep the lessons learned from this particular history alive and usable.

Emily Roysdon, a founder of the feminist collective LITR (Lesbians to the Rescue), asks similar questions more directly, out loud. Her silkscreens-on-wheels are movable props for impromptu speeches, by her or by anyone moved to give one. Like certain other young American artists — Ms. Cornell writes about them in her astute essay — Ms. Roysdon makes art and activism one thing: you make history by living it, saying it, giving it form.

Those forms are pretty awesome in the extraordinary video by Mr. Gaillard, a French artist born in 1980. His three-part visual essay in aestheticized violence opens with a slowly building fight-club clash between two crowds of young men; continues with a fireworks display over a French housing block minutes before it is demolished; and concludes with a jittery flight above Soviet-era apartment towers that stand, crushing huge and blank, in a bleak Russian landscape.

More often in this show, though, history is internalized, a state of mind, half-hallucinated, as it is in the animated film by Mr. Bakowski, an artist from Poland, who accompanied his flickering watercolor images of toilets, tired feet, detached sexual organs, rotted fruit and faded flowers with a half-whispered litany of spoken phrases. The results are reminiscent of William Kentridge's films on South Africa, but also suggested a string of diary jottings that end with a prayer: “Dear Angel God Mother, Care for us Dear Queen. If only there was no evil, illnesses and cripples.”

The apocalyptic tone of this piece, and of Mr. Gaillard's, was sounded in an earlier exhibition, “After Nature,” which Mr. Giomi organized last summer and is still the best thing the museum has done since its move to the Bowery. It drew its

ONLINE: BUILDING ROME IN A DAY
A slide show tracking the rise and fall of a cardboard Rome.
nytimes.com/design

power primarily from its imaginative generational mix of artists, with undervalued figures like William Christenberry and Nancy Graves at one end of the spectrum, 30-something figures like Klara Lidén and Tino Sehgal on the other. The two younger artists, both Millennials, are hot market properties, probably too hot for this conspicuously low-key group show (though both appear in the “Artist Directory”). Mr. Christenberry, born in 1936, and Ms. Graves, who died in her 50s in 1993, are underappreciated figures, with long-developing, multifaceted careers. It was the combination of new and old that made “After Nature” work, gave it a psychological unity and resistant texture, lifted it above business as usual.

“Younger Than Jesus” doesn't have a comparable sense of unity, texture or lift. It is, despite its promise of freshness, business as usual. Its strengths are individual and episodic, with too much work, particularly photography, making too little impact. But my point is that beyond quibbles about choices of individual works, it raises the question of whether any mainstream museum show designed to be a running update exclusively on the work of young artists can rise above being a preapproved market survey. Removed from a larger generational context, can such a survey ever become a story, part of a larger history? (The same question applies to museum exhibitions that leave young artists out of the picture.) I'm asking. It's a complicated subject. I don't know the answer.

In any case, a generational challenge has already been taken up elsewhere. A small commercial gallery called BLT, on the Bowery across from the New Museum, has announced that its May exhibition will consist exclusively of artists born before 1927. Louise Bourgeois, Lucian Freud and Elsworth Kelly will be among the participants. The show will be called “Wiser Than God.”

Matt Keegan in New York
ARTINFO, March 6, 2009
Sarah Douglas



By Sarah Douglas
March 6, 2009

Matt Keegan in New York

NEW YORK—Whipsmart young conceptualist **Matt Keegan** appears to be exploring a new vein of art making: If the go-go market of the last several years brought us what British critic **Ossian Ward** dubbed “bling conceptualism” (exhibit A being **Terence Koh**’s gold-plated turds), Keegan is making what we might call “domestic conceptualism.” (Put differently, if there can be said to be artists of the sublime — **Barnett Newman**, et al — Keegan may be our first artist of the subprime.) His current show at **D’Amelio Terras** in New York, titled “New Windows” and running through April 25, is affectingly zeitgeisty, but it takes some time, some extended looking, and a little puzzling out to fully experience it.

Nearly blocking your passage into the small room that houses his work is a tall slab of drywall on which are carefully incised phrases like “Who are they and when are they coming?” which were garnered from the movie *Field of Dreams*. Past this slab are six small photocollages that take as their starting point a banal event in Keegan’s old apartment on New York’s Lower East Side. The super had come to fix a window. Keegan photographed him at work several times, and has taken the images apart and rearranged them, such that the super’s tools — hammer, tubs of sheetrock, broom, gloves, sponge, trowel, hose, garbage can, spirit level — are arrayed around the room in strange ways. So is the super himself, who sometimes seems to be working outside the window, beyond which Keegan has jumbled the view so that the street appears to be in the sky. Across from these collages, Keegan has cut out an aperture in the gallery wall — revealing three layers of sheetrock — into which he has placed a lush color photograph of a sunbeam piercing thick foliage. Kittycorner to it is a painting — or rather what appears to be a deconstruction of a painting, the canvas seeming to peel away, revealing the frame — by his friend, artist **Richard Aldrich**, whose recent show at nearby **Bortolami** gallery closed last week. The painting echoes the shape of the window in the collages. Across the room from Aldrich’s painting, leaning against a wall, is a life-size photograph of Keegan’s cat Neptune affixed to a thin sheet of aluminum, so that the cat appears to sit in the gallery. And on the reverse side of the *Field of Dreams* sheetrock is a large photograph of Keegan’s old apartment, sans construction work — a serene view of a gray couch and coffee table accented by the sunlight that streams through the windows.

Keegan is playing here with space both real (the cutout gallery wall) and remembered (the reference to Aldrich’s show, the scenes of the apartment in disarray). His work may at first glance seem heady and opaque, but one key to his concerns comes in an edition of 500 booklets he produced for the exhibition. Inside are images of buildings in varying degrees of completion, some veiled in scaffolding, often viewed from skewed angles or shown crisscrossed by shadows from other structures, such that they resolve into abstract studies of space. Bookending those photos are two reproduced articles, one from the *New York Times* that tells the story of an Atlanta builder whose re-creation of the White House has been threatened by foreclosure, the other a *New Yorker* “Talk of the Town” piece that asks what the city will look like in the wake

Matt Keegan in New York
ARTINFO, March 6, 2009
Sarah Douglas

of the subprime collapse, with its shuttered storefronts and “stillborn” construction sites. “What will become of the pits?” the article asks. “Can we turn them into half-wild swimming holes, like the granite quarries of New England? Ring them with barbed wire and convert them into debtors’ prisons or interment camps for the culprits who structured synthetic C.D.O.s?” In his collages, Keegan is subtly exploring themes of entropy and renewal — taking his super’s job one step further by tearing up the very fabric of his living room, and in so doing, showing how flimsy (just bricks and layers of sheetrock) a home really is. If it’s possible, he’s made a kind of subprime poetry.

Another hint lies in the artists who interest him. A prodigious curator — he did the programming for **Andrew Kreps Gallery** for several months in 2005 — and a sharp writer, two years ago Keegan penned an article for *Modern Painters* magazine about artists whose works “insist on memory in a space designed for forgetting, treat time in ways that extend beyond a 30-day exhibition cycle, and require the venue of viewing... to be activated over and over.” Something similar could be said of Keegan’s own exhibition, where his collages remix time and space, as the gallery itself is subtly transmogrified into a domestic setting.

1. **Xylor Jane: N.D.E.** at Canada, through March 29

“Xylor Jane’s paintings are something to experience in person — a jpeg will never suffice, and even the best reproduction will be unable to record the visual complexity of her math-informed and meticulously plotted works. She spent a year making the paintings for this show, and each work and each room of the gallery is clearly considered. Luke Murphy’s statement made available by Canada addresses the ‘painting structures’ that generate the work on view and how these various decisions are directly connected to Jane’s life. Murphy’s straightforward and readable text illuminates the layers of Jane’s rich and ongoing practice. The paintings in ‘N.D.E.’ have an optical vibration that emanates from numbers and math, but also contain a pulse deeply anchored in everyday life.

2. **House Call** at Three’s Company, through March 23

“Your place or mine? Three’s Company is a by-appointment-only project based in Alex Gartenfeld and Piper Marshall’s Chinatown apartment (13 Allen St., #4, NY, NY, 10002, gallery@threescompany.tv). Currently, there is a group show titled ‘House Call’ featuring work by Richard Aldrich, Leigh Ledare, and Lisa Tan. Performances will be an important part of all exhibitions in the space; Aldrich, along with Amy Granat, inaugurated this practice on February 22. According to Alex, ‘Three’s Company will be open 12 months a year, by appointment only, but all plans are tentative. We have no budget.’”

3. **Regift**, curated by John Miller, at the Swiss Institute, through April 4

“Jamie Isenstein’s *Eggresses (prop)* and *Unbird (prop)* are described as ‘props from an undisclosed television show about LGBT friends (both 2007).’ These props were made as likenesses of artworks that Jamie originally created and exhibited for a solo show at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. She was allowed to keep the prop versions of her artworks after (contractually) agreeing not to mention the show or network. I won’t mention them either. I will merely say that it rhymes with a show called *The Hell Nerd*, on a cable network that sounds like Go Time.”

4. The launch of **Shannon Ebner’s** *The Sun as Error, The * as Error, The * as E//OR* at White Columns, March 6

“It is always worth going by White Columns. Each and every room, vitrine, and surface is put to good use. If you missed the amazing 40th Anniversary show, stop by tonight for Shannon Ebner’s book launch, and go back for the next round of shows that start on March 10 and run until April 18.”

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5. **Manzoni: A Retrospective** at Gagosian Gallery, through Mar 21

“William Pym said it best on Artforum.com: ‘The Piero Manzoni retrospective at this gallery surpasses a ‘definitive’ designation in such emphatic fashion that the casual qualifications for ‘museum-quality’ exhibitions in commercial spaces must now be rewritten.’”

And watch out for...

6. **Apartment Shows**

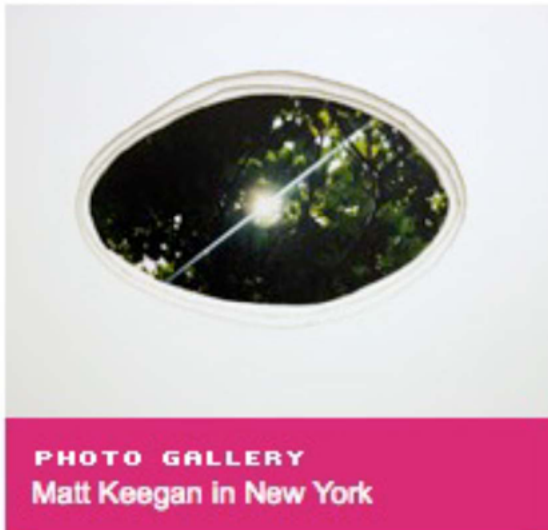
“These events are co-organized by Denise Kupferschmidt and Joshua Smith in mainly Brooklyn-based apartments. Denise says she and Joshua ‘aren’t treating this as a curatorial project, but more of an one-night event that will stay current and in-the-now.’ They ‘will do it every month or so until we’re tired of doing it, which hopefully is a long time from now.’ Their next (yet-to-be-titled) show will take place on Sunday, March 15, at S. 3rd and Roebling, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and will include work by Ann Craven, Mariah Robertson, and Peter Coffin, among others.”

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Matt Keegan in New York

By Sarah Douglas

Published: March 6, 2009



NEW YORK—Whipsmart young conceptualist Matt Keegan appears to be exploring a new vein of art making: If the go-go market of the last several years brought us what British critic Ossian Ward dubbed “bling conceptualism” (exhibit A being Terence Koh’s gold-plated turds), Keegan is making what we might call “domestic conceptualism.” (Put differently, if there can be said to be artists of the sublime — Barnett Newman, et al — Keegan may be our first artist of the subprime.) His current show at D’Amelio Terras in New York, titled “New Windows” and running through April 25, is affectingly zeitgeisty, but it takes some time, some extended looking, and a little puzzling out to fully experience it.

Nearly blocking your passage into the small room that houses his work is a tall slab of drywall on which are carefully incised phrases like “Who are they and when are they coming?” which were garnered from the movie *Field of Dreams*. Past this slab are six small photocollages that take as their starting point a banal event in Keegan’s old apartment on New York’s Lower East Side. The super had come to fix a window. Keegan photographed him at work several times, and has taken the images apart and rearranged them, such that the super’s tools — hammer, tubs of sheetrock, broom, gloves, sponge, trowel, hose, garbage can, spirit level — are arrayed around the room in strange ways. So is the super himself, who sometimes seems to be working outside the window, beyond which Keegan has jumbled the view so that the street appears to be in the sky. Across from these collages, Keegan has cut out an aperture in the gallery wall — revealing three layers of sheetrock — into which he has placed a lush color photograph of a sunbeam piercing thick foliage. Kittycorner to it is a painting — or rather what appears to be a deconstruction of a painting, the canvas seeming to peel away, revealing the frame — by his friend, artist Richard Aldrich, whose recent show at nearby Bortolami gallery closed last week. The painting echoes the shape of the window in the collages. Across the room from Aldrich’s painting, leaning against a wall, is a life-size photograph of Keegan’s cat Neptune affixed to a thin sheet of aluminum, so that the cat appears to sit in the gallery. And on the reverse side of the *Field of Dreams* sheetrock is a large photograph of Keegan’s old apartment, sans construction work — a serene view of a gray couch and coffee table accented by the sunlight that streams through the windows.

Keegan is playing here with space both real (the cutout gallery wall) and remembered (the reference to Aldrich’s show, the scenes of the apartment in disarray). His work may at first glance seem heady and opaque, but one key to his concerns comes in an edition of 500 booklets he produced for the exhibition. Inside are images of buildings in varying degrees of completion, some veiled in scaffolding, often viewed from skewed angles or shown crisscrossed by shadows from other structures, such that they resolve into abstract studies of space. Bookending those photos

Matt Keegan in New York
Art+Auction, March 6, 2009
Sarah Douglas

are two reproduced articles, one from the New York Times that tells the story of an Atlanta builder whose re-creation of the White House has been threatened by foreclosure, the other a New Yorker "Talk of the Town" piece that asks what the city will look like in the wake of the subprime collapse, with its shuttered storefronts and "stillborn" construction sites. "What will become of the pits?" the article asks. "Can we turn them into half-wild swimming holes, like the granite quarries of New England? Ring them with barbed wire and convert them into debtors' prisons or interment camps for the culprits who structured synthetic C.D.O.s?" In his collages, Keegan is subtly exploring themes of entropy and renewal — taking his super's job one step further by tearing up the very fabric of his living room, and in so doing, showing how flimsy (just bricks and layers of sheetrock) a home really is. If it's possible, he's made a kind of subprime poetry.

Another hint lies in the artists who interest him. A prodigious curator — he did the programming for Andrew Kreps Gallery for several months in 2005 — and a sharp writer, two years ago Keegan penned an article for *Modern Painters* magazine about artists whose works "insist on memory in a space designed for forgetting, treat time in ways that extend beyond a 30-day exhibition cycle, and require the venue of viewing... to be activated over and over." Something similar could be said of Keegan's own exhibition, where his collages remix time and space, as the gallery itself is subtly transmogrified into a domestic setting.

Keegan is now teaching at the College of the Arts in California, but he was back in town long enough to install his work, attend his opening, and see some exhibitions.

ArtReview

March 2008, pp.84-85

FUTURE GREATS

Matt Keegan by Shamim M. Momin

The seemingly oxymoronic notion of 'connective interruptions' provides a useful way to consider the work of Matt Keegan, whose various incarnations as artist, editor and curator exemplify an idea of expansive practice so prevalent in recent art. His exhibitions, participatory publications and curatorial projects explore ideas of community without idealism, interrogating both literally and metaphorically how social spaces are staged and desired, and where absence, incision and removal can more powerfully frame identity than emphatic presence.

In 2005, dealer Andrew Kreps invited the artist to programme his interim space (itself an oddly shaped space, evoking a kind of transitional, interstitial sensibility) for five months. Expanding the notion of discourse among artists and his interest in intersection and collaboration, Keegan's efforts resulted in *Etc.*, a kind of exquisite corpse series of events, lectures, exhibitions and screenings by invited artists, who in turn designed their own events, often including other artists or performers. Eventually the series was documented in a folder-style publication, which contained discrete documents of each individual effort – a format evoking the important conceptual conceit of communal function that maintains the authorial mark (quite literally holding together linked but distinct approaches loosely but deliberately under a single cover). This constellated approach to an artist's community of ideas is further expanded in Keegan's ongoing publication *North Drive Press*. A limited-edition *boîte-en-valise* of artist interviews and multiples, and a clear conceptual descendant of the seminal *Aspen* magazine project, it is approached by Keegan and his co-editor as a way to collect and disperse those linked conversations.

The central component of Keegan's most recent exhibition, *Any Day Now* (2007), might here function to capture these interleaved interests. A large wall sculpture wended its accordion-like way diagonally across the gallery space, serving to redirect the flow of viewers in the gallery and thus activating the space of transit itself. Keegan's interest in the idea of – perhaps more accurately the construction of – social space is further reflected as one navigates around the di-wall structure. Literally

stripping down the architecture to its basic elements, Keegan has excised letters from the Sheetrock that spell out 'good to see you'. Passing viewers look directly through the letters, alternately engaging the people or space beyond and being rejected from that connection with the wall serving as both membrane and barrier, a means to circumscribe a community of viewers in a shifting state of identification (*You, Me, I, We* being the title of a work in the show), what Keegan has called 'a space of perpetual implication/engagement'.

The exhibition overall is replete with an interest in layers and double-sidedness. For example, a stencil of the word 'men' is excised directly from the wall, repeated and layered to create shaped abstractions that hover between a formal composition and a frighteningly intense invocation. Elsewhere, images of men lounging casually in a chair are layered onto the space of a larger version of the same man's face, whose visage has been excised. Much like the wall text, they evoke both community and regimentation.

Keegan described *North Drive Press* as a 'conduit product', a phrase equally applicable to his other endeavours. Similarly, a collaboration in 2006 with the artist Leslie Hewitt, *From You to Me and Back Again*, elegantly refined this current of motion and reversal, individuality and community, and the ever-shifting shape of our most meaningful exchanges.

the page *Any Day Now*, 2007 (Installation view)
Installation view *Any Day Now*, Matt Keegan, March 2008
360 x 104 x 72 cm, edition of 2 + 1 AP. All works
Courtesy DiMella Tamm, New York



ARTREVIEW



MODERN PAINTERS

The International Art Magazine
December 2007-January 2008



MATT KEEGAN, HUMBERTO, HUMBERTO, HUMBERTO
(GALLERY 2007, DIGITAL C-PRINT, 65X 114 CM QUARTER)
D'AMELIO TERRAS, NEW YORK

MATT KEEGAN D'AMELIO TERRAS

Matt Keegan's work, with its precise lines and hard edges, reveals the artist's conceptual clarity. Mixing words and images with recurring voids in serial patterns and compositions, Keegan emerges from a generation of artists of the '60s, most notably Joseph Kosuth, who gave precedence to the notion of art-as-idea. Yet, while Kosuth strove to eliminate ethnicity, gender, or eroticism from his work, Keegan aims to reinsert these particularities. *Humberto, Humberto, Humberto* (all works 2007)—a life-size cutout of a male silhouette constructed of multiple C-prints—has a smaller cutout of the same form in lieu of the face. The title evokes the protagonist of Nabokov's *Lolita*, but Keegan's contemporary Lothario figure is ambiguous: he can be seen as either sexual predator or prey. The voided visage, infinitely repeating in a mise en abyme effect, is a site for substitution and can be filled by anyone. This aesthetic realization of the shifter, a linguistic sign that gains significance only because it is empty, motivates much

of Keegan's work, including *You, Me, I, We*, in which viewers are invited to become the subjects of personal pronouns, and *Good to See You*, where they are tempted to literally fill the work by occupying the voids left by the cutout letters of the title phrase in the life-size installation. While acknowledging the viewer's role in imbuing art with meaning, Keegan nonetheless remains true to the tenets of Conceptualism, reasserting that the illusion of individuality is simply a function of language.

—NUIT BANAI

ART PAPERS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007



MATT KEEGAN
NEW YORK

The work on view in Matt Keegan's one-person show *Any Day Now* is flat—silkscreens, photographs, paper-thin incisions in the surface layer of drywall, cut and layered or mounted and freestanding images (D'Amelio Terras; September 6--29, 2007). It is flat in other ways, too. The phrases and words he chooses for his text works are those that have lost the roundness of meaning. His photographs—two, three or multiple shots of the same subject—are literal; they can only be described by describing what they depict.

All this flatness is about itself, or more precisely, about the deception of flatness. A deadpan presentation of everyday worn-down stuff, the exhibition constitutes a critique of the images and words we take for granted. His paper-thin works offer, in fact, a textured reading of our meaning-making and of the tools we wield in this enterprise.

At different places in the gallery, the letters M, E, N, repeat, inscribed in typeset on the walls in horizontal lines that form overlapping trapezoidal shapes. The generic noun "men" jumps from the pattern only to dissolve into a field of lines as the letters jumble and the cuts become less distinct. A deflated word re-forms, invisible and everywhere, and once dormant connotations strain against its three-letter simplicity.

An eight-foot-tall accordion-like structure made from crudely cut, studded sheetrock spans the gallery's two central pillars. Here, the popular greeting "Good To See You" is cut out at eye level, each enlarged letter taking up a fold. As the viewer passes, the phrase unfolds rhythmically echoing the musical way it is often delivered. Known as the socially savvy salutation—avoiding forgotten names and blurring the particulars of earlier greetings—this empty, boneless sentiment is here an actual screen.

These and other text-based works featuring similarly innocuous phrases flaunt their plainness and point to

language's inability to describe even the most basic stuff of life. "You and Me" appears out of a blizzard of overlapping typfaces in a series of monochrome silkscreens, unmotored and lost.

Keegan's untitled series of snapshot photocollages echoes his cuts in the gallery's surfaces. Each depicts a man casually seated in a chair, but Keegan has sliced into the picture's surface, removed his body, and filled the silhouette with random accumulations of image fragments. In one work, many legs fill the void: layered one atop the other, they kink in unison.

Keegan emphasizes the thingness of pictures as he gives physical form to overused words—to take issue with their descriptive capacity. He emphasizes the image's literal thinness by cutting and rearranging the material itself. In this, he points to the lack in portraiture. Angled in a gallery corner is the oversize cutout image of another young man seated in a chair. His irregular shape is mounted and precariously, but perfectly, balanced against the wall and floor by his elbows and the toe of a hush puppy. The man's face is excised and replaced by a to-size repetition of the cutout, a reiterative move that renders his features an indistinguishable blot.

At its best, Keegan's work has a slight presence that echoes the two-dimensionality of its content. This lack of fullness implies that something is missing—a feeling of absence that runs through the works in *Any Day Now*. The words and images that populate our everyday and attempt to define us come up short. With this show, he makes these plain things plainer, revealing that they are the most peculiar of all.

—Erin Shirreff

Matt Keegan. Jedediah Caesar
The New York Times, September 7, 2007
Roberta Smith

The New York Times

FRIDAY, September 7, 2007, E33
ROBERTA SMITH Art in Review

Matt Keegan Jedediah Caesar

In their first shows with this gallery, Matt Keegan, from New York, and Jedediah Caesar, a newcomer who lives in Los Angeles, are separated by more than a continent. In "Any Day Now" Mr. Keegan goes for surgical precision from start to finish (the X-Acto knife is highly favored), while in "Three Views From Space" Mr. Caesar starts with randomness before finishing up with some slicing of his own. Both artists emphasize extreme detail.

Using language, photographic collage, incised walls and seemingly simple but actually complex printing methods, Mr. Keegan conjures up the intimacy of friendship, maybe sex and a sense of social or political solidarity. Layers and double-sidedness seem to fascinate him, most overtly in a screenlike structure, made of drywall and aluminum studs, and perforated with big see-through letters. They spell the over-used greeting "Nice to See You."

In four works trapezoids are meticulously cut into or painted on the wall (look carefully); they repeat the word "men," evoking both solidarity and regimentation. But Mr. Keegan's affinity for randomness is signaled by several large color photographs, documenting either a found installation piece or carefully arranged chunks of pavement-on-pavement.

These variously smooth and rocky aggregates point directly to Mr. Caesar's updates of Process Art, which involve filling makeshift boxes with quantities of trash — everything from grass and lemon rinds to an easy chair — and then topping off the mélange with different amounts of resin. The results hover disconcertingly between geology and garish artifice; they seem to scream Las Vegas.

His pieces employ different applications. One uses a minimal amount of resin, resulting in a bristling aggregate. In others, dense trash-resin chunks have either been left alone; trimmed of outer layers (which remain part of the work); or thinly sliced into a mural-size expanse, which effectively tiles a wall in symmetrical patterns reminiscent of sliced agate, terrazzo and a deviant form of marble. Seeing Mr. Caesar's work in quantity reveals what might be called an Arman problem: While visually alluring, his work verges on gimmicky.

The pairing of these two artists is astute and mutually beneficial, but it also suggests that Mr. Keegan could use some of the juice and muscle taken for granted by Mr. Caesar, who in turn needs more of his colleague's Conceptual subtlety.

Through Sept. 29 at D'Amelio Terras, 525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea; (212) 352-9400.

Afterall

Afterall Online, June 2007

Artists at Work: Matt Keegan

Interview by Audrey Chan



Box and interior shot of North Drive Press #3, 2006.

Photograph by Sara Greenberger Rafferty

Matt Keegan is a New York based artist and the co-editor of North Drive Press. This annual publication, now in its third year, takes the form of a limited edition box-cum-treasure chest of commissioned artist interviews and multiples. The contents of past issues have included: mini LPs, stickers, posters, recipes, sew-on patches and postcards. Multiplicity is at the heart of Keegan's practice, which thrives on collaboration as he attempts to expand the notion of discourse among artists. Audrey Chan interviewed him in New York City in September 2006.

Audrey Chan: As an artist publication, North Drive Press is the ultimate confluence of zine, box of miscellany, and collector's item. Its loose contents can be rearranged and perused at whim, which makes the process of 'reading' the magazine open-ended and associative rather than linear, as in a traditional bound format. Your process of soliciting contributors is similar, as it is based on a self-proliferating social network of artists. Has the formula changed with North Drive Press #3 and how do you want it to develop?

Matt Keegan: The number of contributors has increased, and since it only comes out once a year, I always want the publication to feel really full. This is the first time that I have worked with a collaborator, Sara Greenberger Rafferty, who is my co-editor. Susan Barber is our design collaborator. It has been really helpful having a co-editor to consider where the project is going - it can be unwieldy with over thirty contributors and no specific editorial parameters. I enjoy the free-for-allness of it; it's this box of stuff and interviews that doesn't have strict editorial constraints. There's no thematic or guiding principle other than people who want to talk with each other or people that Sara and I would like to hear talk to each other. With the multiples, contributors have \$500 to make something in an edition of 500, and so the options for what gets produced vary every year. I'm trying to figure out what the role of an editor is for NDP. There's a great publication called ESOPUS and they have a theme for every issue but the form itself is very rich and there are all these options for printing, interviews, contributions, and there's a CD and posters. There's a richness that parallels NDP. I look at that project and wonder what it would be like if our next project were thematic.

AC: Or, because NDP is not thematic, instinct becomes the theme of each issue and it can shift and change at whim. So the organizing principle of the publication becomes centered on the editors' instincts, bottom-up rather than top-down.

MK: And my instinct is for the project to stay as loose as it is. But I think once there are five issues we should make a book that is just the interviews. North Drive Press is only three years old so there's always something to learn from it. But I'm excited about how it will continue to change. That's one thing I love, that it can never be completely predetermined.

AC: You have resisted 'topicality' in your choices as editor of NDP, but you also organized a queer-themed panel discussion at Greene Naftali Gallery in New York in December 2003. That event tackled headlong the issue of identity politics in the art world, a subject that gained a foothold in the critical discourse of the early to mid-1990s but which faced a harsh backlash soon after. Given that history, what was the impetus for you in organizing the panel discussion?

*MK: In 2003, there were a lot of queer-themed shows and queer-oriented projects in New York. It was as if [the exhibition sites] were saying, 'We're in the midst of a conservative administration, so let's have these shows that are more overtly about same sex desire'. The shows were problematic in a lot of ways, but they were successful in that they were well attended and received a lot of press. But there was no conversation about the fact that, for example, the most talked-about show on television at that time was the reality show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. Neither was there a discussion of what it meant to have a queer-themed show at that political moment, nor what it meant to have a show that either excluded or barely included a lesbian and transgender contingency. It was interesting to think about a conservatism within those choices. So I organized this discussion in response to the queer-themed shows: *Today's Man* at John Connelly Presents; *My People Were Fair...*, curated by Bob Nickas at Team; and *DL: The 'Down Low'* in *Contemporary Art*, curated by Edwin Ramoran at Longwood Arts Project.*

*AC: It is interesting that you mention the popularity of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* because what the show succeeded in doing was so-called 'improving' the image of gays in America. In particular, it promoted the message that gay men are nice people and that they can help you, which is distinct from...*

MK: That's the key to that show, that they're there to help you, not to have individual personalities.

AC: ...and that's different from a public discussion of gay marriage and civil rights in the United States. Reality television ends up being one arena in which gender equality is ghettoized.

MK: That actually led to some interesting conversations about 'queer dollars' and 'gay capital' or the notion of 'metrosexual' as being explicitly about commerce, about buying hair gel and the right shoes. There was some interesting discussion about that monetary connection to queer culture.

Artists at Work: Matt Keegan

Afterall, June 2007

Audrey Chan

AC: Whom did you invite to serve on the panel?

MK: I invited John Connelly; Edwin Ramoran; Scott Hug, an artist and founder of K48; Ginger Brooks Takahashi, one of the co-founders of LTTR; Carrie Moyer, a painter who started Dyke Action Machine; AA Bronson, an artist in *Today's Man* and former member of General Idea; and José Muñoz, a curator and professor at NYU who served as the moderator. The transcript was featured in the first issue of *North Drive Press*.

AC: What was unsatisfactory to you about the way in which queer identity and politics were represented in the shows?

MK: I was part of the *Today's Man* show and I saw Bob's show at Team and Edwin's show at Longwood Arts Project and I felt like there needed to be a critical discussion of what these shows were attempting to do. I wanted to know what was the subversive potential of these shows when our government was advocating and is continuing to advocate a complete erasure of equality and acknowledgment of same-sex couples and relationships. I had done my undergraduate studies in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Senator Santorum is one of the most vocal anti-homosexual and anti-equal rights politicians in the United States. In the spring of 2003, he made comments such as, 'I have nothing against homosexuals, but I condemn homosexual acts.' Basically he is saying that you can be queer, but don't have sex, just hold hands and go to church. To hear those words and then to go to Chelsea and see a show of beautiful boys made me ask, 'What is this doing?' I'm all for something that's fun and that you can take pleasure in because it is an image that counters such bullshit. In fact, there were lots of people in the audience that said, 'That show was really fun and we needed that.' But I also felt that there was a potential for the shows to be just entertainment. Maybe entertainment is not the right word, but the shows themselves didn't have the collective energy of a forum where people could talk openly about the issues that were raised.

AC: But how do you measure the subversive potential of an exhibition or work of art?

MK: My answer would be contingent on the intentions of the work at hand. At the panel discussion, there was a lot of energy in the room because people were both pleased and upset by the shows. People in the audience were fired up, asking questions like, 'How can you have a show that talks about masculinity without talking about the possibility for a transgendered body?' There was a heated discussion about the fact that women and transgendered people were absent from these shows. Also, there started to be a conversation about the absence of artists of color in the Chelsea portion of these projects. We all wanted to talk in a way that was not nice and pleasant - it was a real discussion. That feeling of wanting to talk, feeling angry, and having a passionate response is for me indicative of something, and it speaks of momentum. Something that I like about making art is that, for me, much of it is about conversation and reflection. That desire for something that is not concerned with capital but rather with conversation and exchange, and wanting there to be a space for that; that kind of desire has a subversive potential. It's tricky because I don't even know what is subversive anymore... it's a tricky word. But I also think about dialogue as having a grassroots effect, in that it may inspire and encourage people to continue the conversation further.

AC: Is it also partly an educational project, to organize these conversations in the gallery?

MK: I don't think of it as educational, but rather about artists and the art-interested talking about what they're responding to and care about. For example, there's a project called Scorched Earth that will eventually exist as a magazine and will release all twelve issues at once. Gareth James, Cheyney Thompson and Sam Lewitt run the project. They state their main concern as 'questioning drawing's place in theory and practice, which is addressed in dialogue with artists, critics, and historians'. One of their events was a talk by John Miller at Scorched Earth's storefront space on the Lower East Side. It was very intimate and there was a feeling that everyone could participate. There was no didactic lecture, nor was John put forward as presenter and purveyor of knowledge with everyone else functioning as a passive audience.

AC: That reminds me of your *Etc.* project at Andrew Kreps Gallery last year, which also explored the idea of audience participation.

MK: *Etc.* consisted of two group exhibitions, 'Excitations' and 'Talk to the Land', and a series of twelve events that I arranged. The events ranged from a live light show to all-day events, lectures and a panel discussion. A comprehensive publication is now available that includes transcripts from the talks and images and blurbs on the shows and other events. If your online readers are interested, they can get copies from Andrew Kreps Gallery in New York or from me directly (matt.keegan@gmail.com) for \$10.

AC: And this year, you were in Cincinnati, Ohio organizing the first museum exhibition of Public-Holiday Projects, an artist-run curatorial group that you founded in 2004 with Rachel Foullon and Laura Kleger. One of the priorities of PIIP is the continuation of a critical discourse that was initiated in graduate school. However, your mission is not contingent on the viewer being familiar with that discourse. How do you reconcile these priorities?

MK: Rachel, Laura and I want the artists that participate in our projects to have more of a voice within the exhibition than they may be allowed in a regular group show. We try to insert into the exhibition source materials and ephemera that the artists may have in their studios or might include in an artist lecture. We also make a publication that accompanies each show, and try to use this space to extend the interests (readings, films, music and others) of each of the artists, so that an audience member can learn more about the behind-the-scenes of the works on view, rather than having information filtered through a curatorial statement or press release that serves a different purpose. As artists, Rachel, Laura and I are aware of the fact that the guiding principles that normally unify artists within a group show (one that is not historically grounded or based on a pre-existing relationship) sets up a theme or foundation that is only relevant for the run of the exhibition. We acknowledge that our groupings are just as temporary, and we try to use additional information to provide a more lasting dialogue between the artist and the viewer and hope for a longer exchange between the participating artists.

AC: I recently visited your two-part exhibition, 'How to Make a Portrait' at White Columns and Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery in New York. The show features your father and includes excerpts from a video made by Gerard Byrne entitled *Why It's Time for Imperial Again*, in which he was cast in the role

Artists at Work: Matt Keegan

Afterall, June 2007

Audrey Chan

of Lee Iacocca, as well as excerpts of a film in which your dad was cast in a small role, but from which his scenes were later edited out. There is also a video, shot by you, of your father on the phone at work remarking to a friend that his artist son is in the room making a video about him. And while at White Columns, I paid a dollar for a copy of the zine that you made with your father, listing recommendations of his favorite restaurants and museums in New York City. It seems like, throughout the project, your father is constantly shifting between object/subject, collaborator, and simply being a dad helping his son with an art project.

MK: His role and presence does shift, and this was important to me. I am interested in my father as a stand-in for the archetypal businessman, the man in the office. Within this two-part show, he is also playing the role of the 'ex-husband', a guide to the city that he grew up in, and the more intimate role of my supportive father. As intimate a project as it is, I hoped that there would be multiple places, through cinema, television, as well as through the personal, where a viewer could enter into the project.

AC: How did your father respond to the exhibitions?

MK: I think his first response was the best. After walking into Nicole Klagsburn, he walked up to me and said, 'I like it, I really like it. It's weird, but I like it.' And that's kind of one hundred percent accurate because it is weird to walk into a room where there are three video versions and a larger than life sculpture of you. I think that he was flattered to have that attention paid to him.

AC: Have you involved your family members in your work previously?

MK: I did a project in the summer of 2001 called *Electa Rayon is 90 Years Old*. I worked with a choreographer and dancers to create a step and freestyle-inspired dance for my maternal grandmother's 90th birthday. It was the first time I ever made a video, organized a performance or worked with dancers. The piece was performed at Union Square in New York and also in a high school gym in Manhattan for the video document. I also wrote a cheer for her.

AC: How does it go?

MK: It is a call and response, step-inspired cheer and it goes like this:

Gimme an E!
What? You got your E, you got your E!
Now gimme and L!
What?
I said an L, I said an L!
Another E!
Yo, we got that E, we got that E!
Now gimme a C!
C, see, sí we got that C!
How 'bout a T?
What?
I said a T like Mr. T!
How 'bout an A?
Hey, hey, he we got that A!
So what does that spell?
E-L-E-C-T-A
Electa! Hey, hey! Electa, hey!
There's no coincidence is sounds...
Electric! Hey, hey electric!

From Cuba to New York, and now in Miami.
Her name is Electa, but she's known as Nanny.
Nanny, Nanny. Nanny, uh, uh, uh...
5 feet tall, weighs as much as her age.
This 90 year old woman can't hold her in a cage.
Light as a feather, but stinging like a bee.
You know that's right if you're talking 'bout Nanny.
Nanny, Nanny. Nanny, uh, uh, uh...
Golden hair, suits this lady with the Midas touch.
Known for her cakes and such, such.
She'll sew you somethin' real nice.
You may wonder at what price?
Just take her to lunch or drive her to church,
She's not trying to fill her purse.
So fellas!
Who?
I said the fellas!
Oh!
This young Pisces is surprisingly single.
So, break it down, break it down, break it down...
This funky jingle!

At the end of the video, she comes out and dances with the dancers. At Union Square, I received an official permit to allow the dancers to perform for park goers, friends, and family. This was before September 11th, so I got the permit very easily and received access to the gym to shoot the video. It's a project that would probably be much harder to do now, depending on who picks up the phone in the Parks Department.

AC: You've mentioned your interest in the 'gift potential' of an artwork. Did you initially conceive of *Electa Rayon is 90 Years Old* as an art project, a birthday present for your grandmother, or an ideal overlapping of the two?

MK: I like to think of this particular project as a happy hybrid, especially in retrospect. The project was about celebrating Electa Rayon for my family and myself, for the people enjoying the park at Union Square and for the dancers, but mainly for her. I also wanted to create something that most people could relate to, namely the shared experience of having a grandmother. My Nanny's health declined after that year, so it was the right time to do it.

AC: Given your multiple modes of operation - as artist, editor, curator, panel organizer - I am curious about what constitutes your notion of the ideal artistic exchange.

MK: I am always searching for a balance between my studio-based work and the collaborative projects and publications. They all inform my art practice. I would really love to find modes of exchange that are not so contingent on a commercial market become more common in art. It would be good if art were more integrated into the general culture in the United States, especially through arts funding; but it's not. So my desire is to be a part of collaborative projects that fill a void that I experience when making work by myself. In collaborative work, there's the inherent problem solving and decision-making, the arguments and discussions, and basic things like shared labor. I also believe that artists are able to create their own modes of presentation and that there's an interest in alternative spaces of exhibition and discussion. In New York, it seems that there is a growing audience that wants to see what is available beyond the commercial galleries or to use these spaces to serve multiple purposes beyond functioning as static showrooms.



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Art

Reviews

Leslie Hewitt and Matt Keegan

★★★★★

"From You to Me and Back Again,"
Wallspace, through Sat 1 (see
Chelsea)

The traditional format of photography exhibitions is rigid, if not stultifying: Print photos the same size, frame them identically and line them up at uniform distances along the wall. Leslie Hewitt and Matt Keegan take exception to that rule, expanding the concept of the photographic into something that cuts into walls, wraps around corners and is nailed to the floor.

The show is the result of a five-year dialogue that began when the pair met at an artists' residency in Maine. This doesn't mean that Hewitt and Keegan merge their practices here, but rather that their works complement each other. Keegan explores the medium's dualistic properites: mirroring, inversion, positive/negative. In one room the word *OR* is cut from the wall; in another, the cut-out letters lean against a wall. *Skyrocket* is a duo of inverted images of treetops, seen from below and installed to form a corner. Hewitt's focus is on the social, how photographs both create and reveal



constructs like race. In addition to displaying rephotographed family snapshots and a photo of a "sculpture" (a stack of books with titles like *Black Protest*), she has nailed an old Kodak booklet titled "How to Make Good Pictures" to the floorboards.

Desk Reflection, a mirror image of the gallery's reception desk (built by a carpenter), and *CMYK Floral*, a changing monochrome floral arrangement in the four colors used in photographic printing, complete a show that initially looks exceedingly minimal, but cleverly opens up discussions of photography into the realm of three dimensions and beyond.—*Martha Schwendener*

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