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MIDDLE AGE

Curated with Diana Kingsley
July 8 – August 12, 2011

Leo Castelli is pleased to announce Middle Age, a group exhibition curated with Diana Kingsley. The exhibition features works by John Baldessari, Jasper Johns, Diana Kingsley, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Pettibone, Ed Ruscha, Ludwig Schwarz, Oona Stern, Lawrence Weiner, and Erwin Wurm.

In speaking about her concept for the exhibition, Diana Kingsley said, “It would seem that middle age, with its attendant sloppy dramas and anxieties (adultery, divorce, career stagnation, bitter failure, obscene success), is the stuff of novels and endless Sunday magazine articles, not a place for the fundamentally youth-driven art world, obsessed as it is with “the new.” But the art world is rife with artists trafficking in this murky realm, where mortality plays such a central role. All manner of dysfunction, resignation, sublimated desires, and yearning abound, as do more benign, quotidian concerns (enter the pathos of real estate, home décor and design addictions). The creeping desire for order out of this chaos has in fact informed art for centuries.”

Lawrence Weiner’s *The Boulders on Top Rent and Split*, Roy Lichtenstein’s *Sunset*, Ed Ruscha’s *The End* and Jasper Johns’ *Untitled*, whose imagery relates to his painting *Fall*, are all emblematic of the exhibition’s poetic, rather than sociological, take on middle age. Ludwig Schwarz’s elaborate cluster of pawned diamond rings speaks both to the anxiety of commitment as well as the commodification of relationships. Oona Stern’s wallpaper work references visual tropes of aestheticized domestic spaces, while Richard Pettibone’s minimal patterned painting evokes the ubiquitous decoration signaling male adulthood and responsibility—the necktie.

Erwin Wurm’s pneumatic sculpture humorously conveys the physical experience of aging as well as perhaps the pitfalls of excess consumption. Diana Kingsley’s photograph of a newborn mushroom and rusting shears, wryly titled *The Young*, alludes somewhat menacingly to upstarts nipping at the heels of the aging. John Baldessari is represented in the show with a portrait of a sort, *Foot and Stocking (With Big Toe Exposed): Shelly*, a hulking image that is at once ominous and vulnerable.

For images or further information, please contact Jessica Duffett: jessica@castelligallery.com.

Gallery summer hours: Mon-Fri; 10-5.

Images from left to right: Ludwig Schwarz, *Untitled (For Miss Eva)*, 2002; Erwin Wurm, *Ich und uberich*, 2008; Richard Pettibone, *Untitled*, 1976