

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For immediate Release: June 3, 2011

TAKING SHAPE

Joseph Beuys / Chris Burden / Rico Gatson / Kelly Heaton / Christine Hill / Pepón Osorio /
Roxy Paine / Sam Van Aken / Hannah Wilke

June 25 - July 29

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts will exhibit *Taking Shape*, a group show of sculptural works from 1974 to 2011 by artists associated with the gallery. Limited to objects that possess shape rather than depict it, the selected works include traditionally-crafted sculptures and transformed ready-mades that comment on a wide-range of pertinent social issues, from a variety of perspectives.

The exhibition features Joseph Beuys' *Noiseless Blackboard Eraser* (1974), *Pala* from *7000 Oaks* (1983), and *Rose for Direct Democracy* (1987) that relate to Beuys' public dialogues and communal activism. *Relic: Prelude to 220 or 110* (1976) recalls Chris Burden's early performances based on self-inflicted dangers to protest the status quo. Hannah Wilke's sculpture, *Primary Life* (1983-92), celebrates female sexuality and, by extension, pursues possibilities for equality in all realms.

Other works in the exhibition are a response to an ever-rising tide of consumerism. Transformed Elmo dolls from Kelly Heaton's large-scale exhibition, *Live Pelt* (2003), trace American commercialism from its fur trade to online commerce. Christine Hill's *PR Portable Office* (2003) promotes a cottage industry entrepreneurial spirit as an alternative to corporate might. Addressing complex racial issues, Pepón Osorio's plaster cast figures of black men, *Untitled* (2003), depict the loss of the authentic self in a racially divided society. Rico Gatson's *Separatist Celebration* (2004) is a metaphor for racial divisiveness, but in these times, also points to our political and economic dissolution. Gatson's African-inspired *Magic Stick #3* (2009) is a counter-reaction to the memories of racial injustices which can never be fully understood or forgiven.

Roxy Paine and Sam Van Aken are each represented by variations of unique objects. Paine's blob-like *Scumaks* (manufactured by his *Auto SCULpture MAKer*) and Van Aken's *Hybrids* (sculptures of mutant fruit) both explore the relationship between the artificial and the natural in an increasingly technological age. Van Aken's *Hybrids* are closely related to his *New Edens* series of grafted trees, exhibited at the 2011 Armory Show to critical acclaim. Sharon Corwin at the Colby College Museum of Art writes: *There is a blatant sexuality to the hybrids especially evident in the combination of an apple and a strawberry. And yet while Van Aken's mutant fruit might elicit laughter, it is also quite horrifying in the context of our genetically modified world.*

Taking Shape describes a formative moment: the beginning of a process that will lead to something new in the end. In the face of today's global challenges, the exhibition highlights the relevance of these artists' themes to our current state of transition, which contains dangers as well as opportunities.

The exhibition is curated by Scott Vincent Campbell.

There will be an opening reception Saturday, June 25, 6 - 8. Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 - 6. Monday by appointment. July: Monday - Thursday, 10 - 6. Friday, 10 - 3. For more information, contact Sarah Paulson (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.

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