

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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SAM VAN AKEN NEW EDENS

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts
At the 2011 Armory Show in New York City
Pier 94 | Booth 949 | Twelfth Avenue at 55th Street

Opening Hours:
Thursday, March 3 – Saturday, March 5: Noon to 8:00 PM
Sunday, March 6: Noon to 7:00 PM

The Feldman Gallery will exhibit a solo installation by Sam Van Aken entitled *New Edens*. An orchard of trees with genetically altered properties will be the main feature of the booth. As designed and grafted by the artist, the trunks and leader branches identify the trees as peach, plum, cherry, nectarine, and apricot, respectively, but each tree has the capacity to simultaneously grow all five fruits. As a work in progress, one can see the five different blossoms on each tree. Alongside the orchard will be synthetic mutations of grafted fruits which form strange and provocative hybrids. A display stand will have hybrid vegetable seed starters in small pots, and on the walls will be large digital prints composed from mixed seed packets, part of the artist's raw material.

The far-reaching implications of these sculptures include issues of genetic engineering, biodiversity versus food monoculture, and, ultimately, the symbiosis of humankind's relation to nature. Far from being the passive recipients of foodstuffs as we go about our daily lives of shopping and eating, we are implicated in the active role of participating in the modern technology of food growth and distribution.

Combining sophisticated technology with traditional modes of art-making, Van Aken's projects cross boundaries between artistic genres, including performance, installation, video, photography, and sculpture. With each body of work, he selects practices and new perspectives that provide a kinesthetic perception of objects and a visceral charge. Sharon Corwin has written in *Currents 2* (Colby College Museum of Art): *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.*

Sam Van Aken is newly represented by the Feldman Gallery. His sculpture, "*oh my god*" (2006), which presents a monumental wall constructed from box stereo speakers that emit sound clips of the eponymous phrase, ranging from the voice of Homer Simpson to witnesses to 9/11, was included in two recent group shows organized by the gallery in New York and in Miami: *En-Garde II: omg* and *En-Garde*. Robert Shuster, writing in *The Village Voice*, described that work as *brilliantly satirizing our sensationalistic culture*.

Selected one person exhibitions by Van Aken have been mounted by the following institutions: Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, NY; Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, NY; Kunsthaus Tacheles, Berlin, Germany; Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME; Hampden Gallery University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA; and Cerealart Project Room, Philadelphia, PA. He has been awarded the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, the Creative Capital Grant in Emerging Fields, the Juror's Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement at the Portland Museum of Art Biennial, and grants from the United States Information Agency and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. He is currently an associate professor and the Sculpture Program Director at Syracuse University.

For more information about the artist, contact Sarah Paulson at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com

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