

# Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

## LABOR INTENSIVE

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June 21-July 25, 2014

**Eleanor Antin, Conrad Atkinson, Joseph Beuys, Heather Cassils, Nancy Chunn, Christine Hill, Simone Jones, Komar & Melamid, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Hannah Wilke**

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts is pleased to present *Labor Intensive*, a group show that expands the defined role labor plays in our individual lives and society as a whole. Often overlooked are the beauty and dignity in work and their potential to be powerful forces of change. All of the selected artists represent labor as the manifestation of ideas, and ultimately, will.

For over four decades, Mierle Laderman Ukeles has been a champion of the sanitation maintenance workers, celebrating their labor by highlighting its necessity and importance. What began in the private sphere with the examination of her own role as a mother and caretaker expanded to the public through her work with the New York City Department of Sanitation, where she is their first and, to-date, only artist-in-residence. Going beyond simply giving thanks or acknowledgment, Ukeles has elevated the status of the maintenance worker to what it really is, caretaker and curator. The nature of her practice asks us to question our ideas of what qualifies as artistic labor and, in turn, as artistic product. On exhibition will be a selection of her work including the *Snow Worker's Ballet* performed in Japan (2012) and *Touch Sanitation* (70-80's).

Unlike Ukeles, Christine Hill utilizes small business and entrepreneurship as her conceptual springboard. Through installations, performances, and multiple storefront ventures, Hill has consistently used the small business as a stage for engagement with her audience. The store becomes a laboratory where our definitions of idea, labor, and product, as well as the social interactions that take place around them, are examined. Hill blends art, philosophy, and commerce in such a way that makes us question the divisions between them. On view in the exhibition will be *Management* and *Reception*, two custom-made steamer trunks - capsules filled with tools used in various facets of a small business.

Other artists in this show approach the subject of labor from a broader viewpoint. Joseph Beuys considered teaching to be his greatest work of art, a means to enact the philosophical and social ideas that he believed could bring change. In his practice, Beuys mixed social, political, and symbolic action to highlight the hierarchical systems that society has created and by which it lives. *Chicago Tapes* presents a documentation of lectures Beuys conducted at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1974), and *Raum 3* is a recording of a work he created in his studio at the Dusseldorf State Art Academy (1981).

With unflinching confidence, Hannah Wilke reminds us to put ourselves on the line as in the famed School of Visual Arts poster, *Having a talent isn't worth much unless you know what to do with it*. Eleanor Antin's narrative from *100 Boots* introduces "one of the most intensive and frequent uses of labor in the history of the world...soldiering." In *Cuts: A Traditional Sculpture*, Heather Cassils disciplines herself to alter her body into a hyper masculine form. In a reinterpretation of Eleanor Antin's 1972 performance *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, Cassils' transformation makes us question our expectations of gender identity and body image.

Conrad Atkinson's drawings reflect the contention between the ruling political power and the countervailing social forces of labor in 1970's Europe. Komar & Melamid pay iconic tributes to manual workers in Bayonne, New Jersey because they are reminded of the same workers in the Russia they fled.

*Labor Intensive* also defines the work of Simone Jones, who invents and builds her own machines. Powered solely by the energy of her own breathing, we watch the artist on a test drive in *A Perfect Vehicle*, as she crosses the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.

The exhibition is curated by staff members Elaine Angelopoulos and Scott Vincent Campbell.

A press kit with more information can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1i6gyx8>

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10-6. Monday by appointment. July: Monday-Thursday, 10-6 Friday, 10-3. For more information, contact Casey Dorobek (212-226-3232) or [casey@feldmangallery.com](mailto:casey@feldmangallery.com)

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