

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOUGLAS DAVIS

REDNESS

June 20 – July 17

REDNESS is a densely packed room installation crammed with the artist's memoirs of the five years that changed the world (1987-1992). In these objects, boxes, and sculptural tableaux, the artist recounts his adventures in Russia with other artists, democrats, the KGB, women, men, friends and allies, political enemies. The gallery-sized room installation tells a narrative story. The story includes a series of *Red Boxes*, *Red Photos*, *Red Sounds*, *Red Drawings* grouped around the centerpiece of the exhibition, *The Death of Karl Marx*. In this piece, Marx is formally laid out in his coffin: his face is actually superimposed with "life" and "death" masks, one of which resembles the artist himself.

Though comic in part, the tone of the show is elegiac, at once celebrating and mourning the idea of *REDNESS*. The artist believes –with Husserl—that *RED* does not have to be red, politically or otherwise, in order to be understood as Red.

Davis has been involved with the entity that is "Russia" since 1974 when he first travelled to meet with dissident artists and intellectuals. From 1974-1978, Davis participated in a unique, histrionic collaboration with Russian artists (now emigres) Alexander Melamid and Vitaly Komar in an epic series of "double-photographs" entitled *QUESTIONS: NEW YORK-MOSCOW*, made simultaneously in two vastly different societies and devoted to the "Line" between East and West. A significant "postscript" to this work, a color photographic mural entitled *ANSWERS: MOSCOW-NEW YORK* dating from 1990, will be on view.

Since 1970, Davis has constructed boxes of wood, metal and glass, replete with symbolic objects and presented with wry irony. Although the box-like installations are "personal" and to some extent autobiographical, their meaning is also political and universal. Most materials come from Eastern Europe.

In the fall, *REDNESS* will travel to the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena and at the Theater for the New City in New York, Public Radio. *REDNESS* will be accompanied by a catalogue in color and black & white published by Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, with essays by Joseph Bakshein, Moscow, and Margarita & Victor Tupitsyn, New York. *REDNESS* will travel in 1993 to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow and to Warsaw, Poland.

Accompanying this exhibition will be a retrospective selection of early film and video works from the Lila and Gilbert Silverman Collection which preserved them from disintegration (the fate of most 60's videos.) Davis is known as one of the pioneers of the video and independent television movement; he has worked in these media since 1969, and his works have been exhibited and telecast internationally. Film and video are only two of the media in which he works. Content ranges from political engagement to the most intimate connection with the viewer, in the gallery or at home in front of his or her television set.

There will be a reception for the artist on Saturday, June 20 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 – 6:00 through June; in July and August, hours are Monday – Friday, 10:00 – 6:00.