

SKARSTEDT PRESENTS

MIKE KELLEY: RECONSTRUCTED HISTORY

On View: September 11 – October 25

Opening: September 11, 6-8pm



Mike Kelley, *Reconstructed History*, 1989, ink and collage on paper, framed, in fifty parts, 11 x 8.5 inches each.
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(New York, NY) **August 14, 2014**—Skarstedt presents *Mike Kelley: Reconstructed History*, an exhibition featuring Kelley's ink and collage works on paper created in 1989, offering new insights into a lesser-explored area of the artist's diverse oeuvre. The exhibition will feature the original 50 illustrations from Kelley's *Reconstructed History* series and will be on view at Skarstedt (550 W. 21st Street) from September 11 through October 25, 2014.

In *Reconstructed History*, Kelley imitated how tomorrow's leaders of society—the next generation—make their mark on the past through the act of defacing textbooks with doodles and notations—signifying their own 'reconstruction' while moving towards the future. In keeping with his conceptual practice and predilection towards using non-art objects as material, Kelley explored the found textbook as medium. He mined yard sales for used American History textbooks and graffitied over their pages. Perverse scribbles of lewd comments and gestures enliven the repressed nature of these seemingly heroic and historic images.

Utilizing the vernacular of scholarly tomes and creating interventions on their pages, Kelley challenged traditional attitudes towards history and education and questions the societal and cultural values usually ascribed to these subjects. This series of works prompts us to reconsider the way history books communicate the stories of our predecessors to our successors, investigating the re-appropriation of meaning through the interpretation of the past. Through this lens, once bland textbook titles become ironic ('A Record of Our Country', 'History for Young Citizens'). Kelley wrote, "The past is where these things belong—adored but not emulated."

The works in the exhibition were famously compiled into a limited edition catalogue published in 1990, titled *Mike Kelley: Minor Histories, Statements, Conversations, Proposals*. Printed in script on faux parchment, Kelley's introduction to the catalogue duplicitously recalls the colonial era in its typeface and scholastic tone. Editor John C. Welchman explains, "The images are not 'found' but made. The result is an elaborate hoax, one of the more vivid of Kelley's many efforts to perform, write, and represent through fictitious adopted personae."

On behalf of the exhibition, Skarstedt will publish a fully illustrated catalogue of the original set of collaged works on paper. Mike Kelley's introductory essay from the 1990 catalogue will be included in the publication.

About Mike Kelley:

Mike Kelley was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1954. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1976. His work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe. Recent solo exhibitions include a major retrospective exhibition at MOCA, Los Angeles in 2014, MoMA PS1 in 2013-2014, HangarBicocca in Milan in 2013, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2012-2013, the WIELS Centre d'Art Contemporain in Brussels in 2008, the Musée du Louvre in Paris in 2006 and the Tate Liverpool and the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig (MUMOK) in Vienna in 2004. Kelley is represented in numerous international collections, as well as those of the Hammer Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Kelley has participated in multiple Whitney Biennials and others held internationally. Mike Kelley was a prolific writer and critic himself, and his work has been featured in multiple publications. Mike Kelley lived and worked in Los Angeles.

About Skarstedt:



20 East 79th Street
New York NY 10075



550 West 21st Street
New York NY 10011



23 Old Bond Street
London W1S 4PZ

Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The New York gallery's program focuses on artists of the late Twentieth Century whose work explores concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Skarstedt opened its London space at 23 Old Bond Street in 2012 with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. Skarstedt London presents exhibitions and publications devoted to the gallery's established area of expertise while also seeking to evolve and expand its focus. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach through high-quality exhibitions and collaborations with top international museums and private collections.

Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21st Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition *Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings*, adding to the gallery's existing locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. The additional gallery space enables Skarstedt to expand on its core program of museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, John Baldessari, Georg Baselitz, George Condo, Carroll Dunham, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Günther Förg, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Robert Mapplethorpe, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Andy Warhol, Franz West, and Christopher Wool.

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