

Petzel

For Immediate Release

ROBERT HEINECKEN

January 21 – February 27, 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, January 21st, 6-8pm

Petzel Gallery is pleased to present its third solo exhibition of works by Robert Heinecken at its 35 East 67th Street location from January 21 – February 20, 2016. The opening reception is on Thursday, January 21st, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

The exhibition will present over twenty-five pieces spanning the years from 1964 – 1978 and will include photo-based painting, film transparency, sculpture, photograms, silver gelatin prints, and the iconic installation “TV Time Environment”.

Robert Heinecken (1931 – 2006) is widely considered a significant forerunner of appropriation art. A self-described ‘para-photographer’, Heinecken was interested in how mass-media was processed and consumed (or, alternately, how mass media processed and consumed its viewers with its “manufactured experience”). He was indebted to the Surrealist idea of chance and automatism as well as Barthes’ critique of photographic indexicality. Both influences run through the exhibition’s “Figure in Six Sections” (1965) a rare “exquisite corpse” stacked sculpture in which a silver gelatin print of the back of a standing nude has been adhered to each of the four sides of an 8 ½” tall wooden cube cut into six layers, similar in structure to a rubix cube. The layers, which rotate on an axis, can theoretically make a multiple of composited bodies depending on how the manipulator turns each layer. At a moment when most artists mandated medium-specificity, Heinecken renders the photograph as sculptural object, using concepts of play and improvisation as a means for demonstrating the photograph’s plurality.

The only remaining complete set of twenty-five silver gelatin prints of Heinecken’s groundbreaking work “Are You Rea” (1964 – 1968) will also be on view. Combining Surrealist juxtaposition with pop methods of appropriation, each of the twenty-five prints is a tonally reversed photogram - what the Surrealist’s called the a “camera-less photograph” - taken from popular magazines, such as *The New York Times*, *Woman’s Day*, *Newsweek* and *Time*, among others. It took the artist over four years to sift through approximately 2,000 images in order to reach the final twenty-five, and the title is taken from the truncated question in one of the women’s magazines asking “Are You Real?” Heinecken’s photogram process turns this question back on itself, demanding the viewer to recognize subliminal, if not obtrusively implicit, paradigms of consumption and objectification present within mass-circulated images.