

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

No More Than Three Other Times **Douglas Huebler, Sherrie Levine, Walid Raad**

521 W 21st Street

Saturday, April 24 – Friday, May 28, 2021

No More Than Three Other Times brings together three generations of conceptual artists whose work explores the slippage between image and text, or image and sign, variously using reflexivity, repetition, and documentary practices. The title is taken from an unintentional misreading of a work by Douglas Huebler, and is indicative of the ways in which the artworks in the exhibition creatively engage with historical and material facts.

Douglas Huebler is known for his work combining carefully chosen, simple descriptive language with other materials, such as photographs, drawings, and maps, to wryly deconstruct the ways meaning is derived from visual information. In a focused selection of works from the 1970s, minimal abstractions are paired with instructive texts that suggest the viewer read the groups of lines or blocks of color not as flat images, but elements in a structure that expands through space along, behind, and beyond the gallery walls. The language playfully exaggerates almost to the point of incongruity the self-referentiality of the minimal art object. These lesser-known works are complemented by an exemplary photographic collage from Huebler's celebrated *Duration Piece* series.

Sherrie Levine's *White Mirrors* are pointedly self-referential in their refusal to reflect their surroundings. Denied their true purpose as objects, the mirrors become blank surfaces that invite a critical engagement with their physical presence. Two sculptures cast from found objects are imbued with a fetishistic desire that manifests in their highly polished surfaces. A light bulb reproduced in stainless steel epitomizes this transformation of the quotidian, while a bronze parrot references Félicité, a character in a story by Gustave Flaubert who endlessly displaces her affections before finally settling on a bird named *Loulou*, who she stuffs and continues to adore after its death. Levine exacerbates the tension between the original and the reproduction by producing these works in editions that are frequently displayed together, challenging the significance of authenticity and singularity in art.

Sweet Talk by Walid Raad is a set of self-assigned photographic commissions that study the city of Beirut. In plates designed to resemble the layout of an art historical textbook, documentary-style streetscapes captioned with meticulous museological cataloguing record the city's physical transformation during the protracted wars. In other works, Raad appeals to the aesthetic of the archive to complicate the relationship between image and text. In a new body of work made similarly beguiling through the illusion of coffee-stained and crumpled pages, anatomical drawings of birds are paired with maps. Against a backdrop of unannotated graphs and directionless arrows, the images gesture to the use of birds as weapons of biological warfare, pointing to specific truths through the juxtaposition of otherwise arbitrary signs.

Douglas Huebler (b. 1924 Ann Arbor, Michigan; d. 1997, Truro, Mass.) was a seminal Conceptual artist. He studied at the Cleveland School of Art, the Académie Julian, Paris, and the University of Michigan. Huebler's first one-person museum exhibition was at the Phillips Gallery, Detroit, in 1953. He exhibited extensively in galleries and museums in the United States and Europe, as well as in international exhibitions such as "Documenta V" (1972). The last retrospective of his work during his lifetime was presented at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1994. There have been several posthumous one-person exhibitions, including at the Camden Arts Centre, London (2002) and the MAMCO, Geneva (2006). Huebler's academic

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career spanned more than forty years; he taught at Miami University in Ohio, Bradford College in Massachusetts, Harvard University, and at the California Institute of the Arts (Valencia), where he served as Dean of the School of Art from 1976 to 1988.

Sherrie Levine (b. Hazelton, Pennsylvania) grew up in St. Louis and moved to New York in 1975, where she rose to prominence as a member of the Pictures Generation. Her work has been the subject of many one-person exhibitions, including at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C. (1988); the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (1988); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (1991); the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (1992); Portikus, Frankfurt (1994); Museum Haus Lange, Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Krefeld, Germany (2010); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2011-12). A one-person exhibition of Levine's work is currently on display at Xavier Hufkens Gallery in Brussels. Levine lives and works in New York.

Walid Raad (b. 1967, Chbanieh, Lebanon) works across installation, performance, video, and photography. Raad's work has been shown in numerous international exhibitions including Documenta 11 and 13, the 14th Istanbul Biennial, the first Vienna Biennale, the Whitney Biennial (2000 and 2002), and the 50th Venice Biennale. He has had one-person exhibitions at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; and Carré d'Art, Nîmes. His 2015 survey exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston and Museo Jumex in Mexico City. Raad's exhibition *Let's be honest, the weather helped* was jointly organized by the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, in 2019–2020. His work is owned by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Kunsthaus Zürich; Centre Pompidou, Paris; among others. Raad lives and works in New York, where he is currently an associate professor at the Cooper Union School of Art.