

## Robert Barry

### Early works

14 March - 30 April 2022

Alfonso Artiaco gallery is pleased to announce the opening of the solo exhibition by Robert Barry on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022 from 10 am to 7 pm.

Among the protagonists of American Conceptual Art, Robert Barry (b. 1936), since the '60s has been involved in the critique of the work of art, renouncing to all expressive, narrative and representative functions, utilizing language as the main medium of his work.

The concept that the *idea* of a work is as important as the actual piece of art accompanies his experimentation over the years, creating connections between the absence and presence of the shape and a continuous dialogue between the viewer and empty spaces.

Since 1967 this approach has constantly pushed his research towards the limits of immateriality and invisibility. Although Barry's research begun with painting, the media used have not always been orthodox or tangible: among those the use of magnetism and thoughts, ultrasonic sounds and inert gases.

However, 'words' have always been part of his aesthetic, they have been seen as evocation of a mental state, as continuous stream of thoughts and as contemplation and as a way to declare to the viewer a temporal and psychic intangibility.

The terms used by the artist are usually drawing from different sources. They have no semantic value, they do not hide any hidden meaning. Each of them is chosen accordingly to the situations or places where the artist is exhibiting.

Their meaning is also influenced by the viewer decision whether or not to read the language in the wider context of the entire work of the artist. The preference for the comprehension of these words within sentences quickly becomes clear when one encounters the fragmented but potentially contextual syntax in which they exist.

"In my work, language for itself is not art. I use language as a sign to indicate that there is art, the direction in which it exists, to prepare for it."

The artist uses words by painting them on walls or canvases, applying them, printing them or writing them on paper, projecting them on slides or sculpting them on various media.

This is Barry's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery, and includes a series of works on paper realized between the '60s and '70s and four large wall pieces, realized with pencil, recalling some of the highlights of his early experimentation.

Robert Barry (1936, New York), lives and works in New Jersey.

His work has been exhibited in international events and exhibitions like: Paris Biennale; Documenta Kassel; Venice Biennale; MOMA Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou Paris; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Barry's extensive exhibition history includes solo shows at Tate Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Nürnberg; Kustmuseum Luzern; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the upcoming exhibition in June at Lausanne Kunsthalle in Switzerland curated by Mathieu Copeland.

His work is included in the permanent collections of the world's major museums and foundations as: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Musée National D'Art Moderne, Centre George Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.