

Press release

June 2013

Jay DeFeo. Chiaroscuro

June 09 to July 20, 2013

Opening on Saturday, June 08, 5-7 pm

Löwenbräu Areal, Limmatstrasse 270, 8005 Zurich

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is happy to announce it's first exhibition of works by the american artist Jay DeFeo (1929-1989) in Europe. The exhibition will comprise works from the Jay DeFeo Trust concentrating on the intensive working period of the nineteen-seventies and -eighties.

This exhibition at Galerie Eva Presenhuber, which spans the years 1971 to 1989, the year of DeFeo's death, includes paintings, drawings, and photographs that are not widely known. All were made after DeFeo stopped working on *The Rose*, her most famous painting, which was subsequently transported from her studio at 2322 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, to the Pasadena Art Museum and which is nowadays in the collection of the Whitney Museum, New York. Immediately after the painting left her studio, Jay DeFeo didn't start making art again until 1970, when she set up her first studio since leaving Fillmore Street.

In 1971, DeFeo actively took up photography and began making gelatin silver prints and photograms. She also cut up photographs and incorporated them into collages. Although the artist became serious about photography long after she was accomplished in a variety of media, she demonstrated mastery right from the start. The wide-ranging body of work that she made in the medium of photography, much of it done in the 1970s, constitutes a self-sufficient oeuvre within her diverse body of work. At the same time the photographic works in the exhibition show precisely the strong relations between all the different kinds of approaches Ja DeFeo has chosen. By isolating objects such as an animal skull or a woman's high-heeled shoe, DeFeo evokes the past, the ravages of time, and the unimaginable future. DeFeo may have frozen a moment, but it is one in which the viewer becomes highly conscious of time's inescapable effect. And yet, for all the melancholy suffusing these particular photographs, her inclusion of a flower bud and filigreed box introduces a powerful note of renewal and transformation.

DeFeo's palette for the majority of her works is largely grisaille, running from white to black. She could apply paint as thick as cement or make a line as fine as eiderdown. In her paintings and drawings—which she usually referred to as either portraits or landscapes—she often collides the abstract and the representational, feeling no need to choose one over the other. At times her work is more overtly representational; other times it is more abstract and elusive. She veers between the two because she is always looking for ways to make her vocabulary of symbols fresh. Even when she is at her most abstract, as in her series *Impressions of Africa*, the viewer senses a perception or memory of an actual thing, which the artist worked on until she developed it into a satisfactory symbolic form.

Jay DeFeo's work is receiving increasing posthumous recognition. Her work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Norton Simon Museum, the art museum of the University of California, Berkeley and Mills College Museum of Art. The Whitney holds the largest public collection of her work and is currently showing a major retrospective running until June 2, 2013.

For further information, please contact Björn Alfers (b.alfers@presenhuber.com) at the gallery.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, 10am – 6 pm
Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm
or by appointment

Parallel shows: Ugo Rondinone, Soul
June 09 to July 20, 2013
Opening on Saturday, June 08, 5-7 pm
Löwenbräu-Areal, Limmatstr. 270, 8005 Zurich

Trisha Donnelly, april
June 09 to July 20, 2013
Opening on Saturday, June 08, 5-7 pm
Maag Areal, Zahnradstr. 21, 8005 Zurich

Outdoor Projects: Eva Rothschild, This and This and This
June 08 to July 20, 2013
Maag Areal, Maagplatz, 8005 Zurich

Mark Handforth, Blackbird
June 08 to September 07, 2013
Maag Areal, Maagplatz, 8005 Zurich