

MAI 36 GALERIE

GENERAL IDEA *P is for Poodle*

Opening: Thursday, 12 September 2013, 6 to 8 p.m.
Exhibition: 13 September - 27 October 2013
Hours: Tue-Fri 11 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Gallery weekend: 26 – 27 October 2013

GENERAL IDEA, formed by AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal in 1969 worked together as a group until the death of two founding members in 1994.

Since then, AA Bronson has been the caretaker of their legacy and, with that, of a social and media critical oeuvre covering virtually every possible form of artistic expression, which has been shown in numerous major exhibitions. GENERAL IDEA is as topical today as it ever was. In 2006, Kunsthalle Zürich presented a major exhibition of their work, and more recently, in 2011 and 2012 respectively, there have been important retrospectives at Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. The current exhibition at the Mai 36 Galerie has been planned to coincide with a show at the Esther Schipper Galerie, Berlin (opening October 11) and has been realized with AA Bronson's great support. Mai 36 Galerie has been presenting the work of GENERAL IDEA through various exhibitions since 1989.

The blurring of the boundary between reality and fiction was addressed in the work of GENERAL IDEA right from the start. The name of the collective evokes a broad-based solution to widespread needs, in much the same way as company names such as General Motors or General Electric. One of the early highlights of their work was their staging of the *1971 Miss General Idea Pageant*. This beauty contest, celebrated over the course of several years with a mix of pomp and humour by audience, jury members and candidates alike, reflected the glamour of consumer society and its business acumen. The pageant was accompanied by a wide range of related works, editions and multiples, and the concept was taken one step further with the imaginary *The 1984 Miss General Idea-Pavillion* as a kind of "vessel", as it were, architecturally designed by GENERAL IDEA. Fictitiously burned down in 1977, their Pavillion lived on in the form of subsequently created artefacts such as the *Pavillion Poodle Fragments*, 1983-1984, in which remains of the Pavillion were presented in the form of archaeological finds. The group's works often featured poodles, but also skulls. The poodle as metaphor – "...in a word, our desire to please: those that live to please must please to live" – appears as an early reference to the issue of AIDS, to which GENERAL IDEA would later dedicate an entire group of works.

A new beginning is heralded by the series of *Baby Paintings* of 1984, including their well-known *Baby Makes 3* self-portrait. Although shadowy and barely discernible in an undefined space, they seem to have an almost indecent vitality, as though representing some new life-force inscribed in the firmament.

In *FILE Magazine* (art magazine, 28 issues published from 1972-89) another focal point and platform for their self-projection they state: "We are concerned with the web of fact and fiction that binds and releases mythologies that are the sum experience of artists and non-artists in co-operative existence today."

The opening is on Thursday, 12 September from 6 to 8 p.m. AA Bronson will be present.
Visual material available on request (office@mai36.com).

We looking forward to seeing you at the gallery, and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

September 2013