

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

Kelley Walker

February 22 - March 29, 2014

521 W 21st Street

Opening reception February 22th, 6–8pm

NEW YORK — Kelley Walker's eagerly awaited one-person exhibition will open at the Paula Cooper Gallery on February 22nd. The show of new work will be on view through March 29th at 521 West 21st street. Opening reception February 22th, 6–8pm.

In his newest body of work Kelley Walker sources and manipulates 1950s-1970s Volkswagen Beetle magazine advertisements designed by the agency Doyle Dane Bernbach. Starting with 1/1 reproductions of spreads from the campaign, Walker pierces DDB's clean, consumer friendly aesthetic with large circular cutouts. These perforated sheets then undergo various digital distortions using a 3D modeling software program called Rhino, which allows the user to visualize a flat sheet of paper folding, torquing, twisting, curling or tearing.

Walker states:

Programs like this are used to render all kinds of things, from architecture to clothing and animation. The 3-D modeling process in Rhino is based on 'nerves' and 'skins'—it's interesting that key elements of the program adopt biological terms. What we did is fuck with the system and force the 3-D program to accept 2-D images as a 'skin.' And one thing that intrigues me about the sculptures is that usually how an object is made in the world is that the form is produced and then the surface is applied. Here, the surface—the ad that's been silkscreened—has been layered and sandwiched within the actual [fabrication] process. First, the aluminum sheet is cut to size, the circles scored—acting as points of registration for the CMYK silk-screening process—then the piece is shaped according to the precise rendering of the program. The machinists get really weirded out because they're afraid to scratch the surface. They're used to bending the metal, shaping it in relation to the computer diagram, and then putting the surface on. They're really having to struggle to find new ways of folding without damaging the surface.

The directness and humor of the VW campaign is largely responsible for the now iconic status of the Beetle and for rebranding a product that, only a decade before, was widely associated with the Third Reich (the "People's Car"). Working between different computer-based image and modeling programs, the flat surfaces of the magazine pages are converted into volumetric shapes. The campaign's pithy slogans ("we get the feeling we're being followed", "how much longer can we hand you this line?") are partly reversed or truncated, peeking through scrambled forms. Merging and juxtaposing digital and analog technologies, the resulting grid-like grouping of silkscreened images teases out connections between advertising, branding, popular culture and art as they have played out since the 1960s—boundaries that Warhol (who also borrowed images from the Volkswagen ad campaign for a series of "Advertisements") famously blurred in his own process.

A new group of sculptural works, closely emulating their two-dimensional counterparts, will re-insert virtual forms into the material world. The melding of discrete spatial and material conditions is explored in another series on view, comprised of multiple layers of highly saturated, silkscreened images. Through multiple transfers of the inked layers to the actual silkscreen armature or template, held taut by stretcher bars, discrete images generate new forms, simultaneously unrecognizable yet surprisingly familiar.

Kelley Walker was born in 1969 in Columbus, Georgia. In 2007, his work was the subject of a one-person show at Le Magasin – Centre National d'art Contemporain in Grenoble, France, which traveled to the Wiels Contemporary Art Center in Brussels, Belgium. In 2013, Kunsthau Bregenz in Austria organized a major exhibition, *Wade Guyton, Guyton\Walker, Kelley Walker*, the first joint presentation of the artists alongside their collaborative identity. Walker's work will be featured in Le Consortium, Dijon (France) as part of *L'Almanach 14*, curated by Anne Pontégnie, from February 22 through June 1, 2014. Walker's first American career survey, organized by Jeffrey Uslip, will open at Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis in 2016. Walker also participated in *Greater New York 2005* at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the *7th Sharjah Biennial* and the *Whitney Biennial 2006*. His work is included in major public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, The Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Sammlung Goetz in Munich.

For more information, please contact the gallery: (212) 255-1105; info@paulacoopergallery.com