

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MITCHELL SYROP*Niza Guy*

November 14, 2015 - January 30, 2016

Ghebaly Gallery is pleased to present *Niza Guy*, Mitchell Syrop's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition takes its title from the artist's series of the same name. *Niza Guy* is meant to read like the colloquial pronunciation of the phrase "Nice Guy". This phonetic recasting establishes the importance of language, as mediated and altered through subjective modes of expression, in Syrop's work. This through line connects the four distinct bodies of work featured in the exhibition.

In *Niza Guy* (2011), a series of twenty-one phrases scrawled onto a notepad and enlarged, Syrop points to the immediacy of language and its capacity to capture the nuance of affectivity. The highly gestural marks found within the works suggest a frantic writing pace, a notion further evidenced by the lack of attention paid to the rules of orthography. One panel reads "AIM YORE BIG GUEST PHAN", with the letters bounding beyond the familiar lines of a ruled notebook. The enigmatic phrases, although varied in terms of legibility, all convey a sense of iterative frustration. The feverish nature in which the bold letters are scoured into the image seem to betray the series' innocuous titular phrase "IMA NIZA GUY".

While the wild strokes on display in *Niza Guy* provide indexical evidence of the act of writing, the sculptures in Syrop's *Steel* series (1974-2015) are inversely defined by the absence of material worked away during the process of inscription. Here, Syrop uses metalwork as another approach to writing. Made by cutting down and shaping large sections of steel with a torch and then grinding and polishing the individual pieces, these works materialize and extend the idiosyncratic language that Syrop weaves throughout his practice.

Either through the additive process of taking lead to a piece of paper or the subtractive process of scraping away at steel, the marks in both *Niza Guy* and the *Steel* series make evident the exchange of materials required for communication to occur. This absence/presence binary is made explicit in several pieces from the *Torn* series (1985-1998). These torn posters mounted onto canvas each feature two words that complement each other in a gestalt-like manner. The texts are carved out of found posters that feature serene landscapes, and are revealed by either the negative or positive space created by the torn away material. These pieces communicate with an efficiency that harkens back to the strategies of advertising slogans evoked more directly in some of Syrop's work from the 1980s.

While *Niza Guy*, and the *Torn* series present the viewer with short, jabbing shots of language, *Hidden* (2014), a series of nine scroll-like texts, develops the stream-of-consciousness style of writing into a deeply introspective prose. The manic notes about notes paint a map of an obsessive quest to find something lost and speaks to the personal violence of language.

Mitchell Syrop (b. 1953, Yonkers, NY) lives and works in Los Angeles, where he earned his MFA from CalArts in 1978. Solo exhibitions include those at Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles; WPA Gallery, Los Angeles; Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles; Galeria Oliva Arauna, Madrid; Santa Monica Museum of Art; Lieberman & Saul Gallery, New York; and the Matrix Gallery, University of California, Berkeley. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions including: "Good Morning Midnight," Casey Kaplan Gallery, NYC; "Index: Conceptualism in California from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; "Commodity Image," International Center for Photography, New York, and Kunsthal Rotterdam; "A Forest of Signs: Art in the Crisis of Representation," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the 2013 Orange County Museum's California-Pacific Triennial. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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