

# Petzel

For Immediate Release

## STEPHEN PRINA *galesburg, illinois+*

May 6 – June 18, 2016

Opening reception: Friday, May 6th, 6-8pm



Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce a new exhibition of works by Stephen Prina who is based in Los Angeles and Cambridge. This is his eighth solo exhibition with the gallery. This body of work was initiated at the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (September 2015) with a second iteration presented at the Museum Kurhaus Kleve (January 2016). The exhibition of *galesburg, illinois+* at Petzel Gallery marks its US premier. The show is accompanied by a catalog published by Walther König with essays by Susanne Figner, Giovanni Carmine, Alex Kitnick and an interview between Isabelle Graw and Stephen Prina.

At Petzel Gallery newly created works and appropriated material such as collectible ceramics, souvenirs and art reproductions conglomerate into a kaleidoscopic view of Stephen Prina's place of birth, Galesburg, Illinois. *galesburg, illinois+* is not an emotional representation of the artist's hometown. Rather we find ourselves within a system of suggested references and personal predilections that follows an artistic logic. The town serves as a projection surface for personal memories and at the same time embeds the artist's biography in a wider historical and cultural context.

At the center of the exhibition's referential web is the Harbor Lights Supper Club, a restaurant that has now disappeared, where the artist performed as a musician when he was young. Starting out from a matchbook with the sketched outlines of the building and the telephone number for table reservations, Prina develops the entire project of *galesburg, illinois+*. What seemingly looks like an insignificant object becomes the cardinal point from which a spiral of thoughts unfurls. The presence of this memorabilia fulfills several functions: as a ready-made it attests to a conceptual approach and as a subject it serves as a perfect linking motif for the whole narration. In line with Prina's working method – which has always been concerned with modes of reproduction and distribution – we find the yellow matchbook at different dimensions as decoration for fabric, which can be seen as connecting tissue in several elements of the exhibition, such as in showcases, frames and on tables and cushions.

Streaming through the gallery, Prina's thirteen-track sound installation *Ode to Galesburg* forms the emotional heart of the project. The music has an alluring effect in the exhibition space and is an invitation to linger. This is a concept album that Prina sings to us, containing folk songs from Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag* and a cover of a Carole King's "It's Too Late," among others. His voice and the guitar sounds, but also the rattling of a passing train, fill the room from nine loudspeakers.

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The + in the exhibition title is comprised of the artist's blind paintings, first created as a single element in 2006 and included in his 2008 Whitney Biennial installation, now are reconfigured to drape over beer hall tables while buttressed and secured by early Twentieth-Century Rookwood Pottery bookends. It expands further with five works from the cycle *The Exquisite Corpse: The Complete Paintings of Manet*, which Prina indexically draws on the complete oeuvre of Edouard Manet and reinterprets each piece in ink washes on rag paper.

Stephen Prina lives and works in Los Angeles and Cambridge, where he is a Professor in the department of the Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University. Solo exhibitions include Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve (2016); Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Sankt Gallen (2015); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2013); Vienna Secession, Vienna; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2011); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2010); Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Sevilla; Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2008) Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main (2000); Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam (1992) The Renaissance Society, Chicago (1989). Group exhibitions (selection): Mumok, Vienna; Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2015/2016); The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2012); Whitney Biennial, New York (2008); Documenta IX, Kassel; Museum of Modern Art, New York (1992); Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (1991); Venice Biennale (1990) Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1989); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1988).

Petzel Gallery is located at 456 West 18th Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. **For press inquiries, please contact Andrew Black at [andrew@petzel.com](mailto:andrew@petzel.com), or call (212) 680-9467.** For general inquiries, please email [info@petzel.com](mailto:info@petzel.com).