

Bruce Conner

MAY 3 – JULY 15, 2016
521 W 21ST STREET

NEW YORK — The Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of large jacquard tapestries by Bruce Conner, as well as a selection of his engraving and photocopy collages. The exhibition will be on view from May 3 to July 15 at 521 West 21st Street.

Few have mastered as many diverse art forms as Bruce Conner, whose relentless innovation extended into sculpture, collage, photography, painting, drawing and film. Often melding multiple mediums and processes in a single work, Conner's hybrid compositions drew from a vast and protean range of interests. A main figure of the West Coast countercultural movement, he delved with equal passion into mysticism and spirituality, punk rock and psychedelia, while tenaciously rejecting American jingoism and capitalist consumerism. Informed by his peripatetic pursuits, Conner's high-density and stunningly inventive works achieve a hallucinatory or phantasmal optical overload; and yet their material and referential multiplicity always remains anchored in meditative structural precision.

Created in 2003, the monumental tapestries on view translate Conner's early paper collages into dynamic textile works. Woven with cotton thread on a Jacquard loom in Belgium, each tapestry was derived from a specific collage by the same name, from the late 1980s and early 1990s. The collages were scanned and digitally edited by Conner and Donald Farnsworth at Magnolia Editions in Oakland, CA, to produce weave files. Sourced from old illustrated books on the Old and New Testaments and the life of Christ, the tapestries' figures have been re-imagined as players in allegorical scenes, addressing themes of mortality and the relationship between medicine and myth. Their esoteric resonance suggests self-examination and emotional inquiry and recall Conner's enduring interest in metaphysical and existential