

JOSEPH GRIGELY

The Gregory Battcock Archive

21 June – 29 July 2016

Opening Reception: Tuesday 21 June, 5.30-7.30pm

At 5.30pm, the gallery will host a talk chaired by HANS ULRICH OBRIST with NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN and JOSEPH GRIGELY followed by the BOOK LAUNCH & SIGNING of a new publication on *The Gregory Battcock Archive*.

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present *The Gregory Battcock Archive* by Joseph Grigely on view in the first floor Project Space at the London gallery. Grigely began exhibiting the archive in 2010 with iterations being shown at the Whitney Biennial in 2014, the Grazer Kunstverein in 2015-16 and most recently at the Kunstverein Hamburg. *The Gregory Battcock Archive's* debut in London coincides with the launch of the first comprehensive catalogue on the archive, entitled *Oceans of Love: The Uncontainable Gregory Battcock*, edited with an introduction by Grigely and published by Koenig Books.

Grigely stumbled upon the archive quite by chance in 1992 whilst exploring the recently abandoned facilities of a storage company that had occupied the same building as his studio in New Jersey. Dispersed across the floor, it included manuscripts, photographs, correspondence, travel notebooks, copies of underground newspapers and excerpts from essays. The discovery led Grigely to ask “the question of what could be learned about Battcock from the otherwise unpublished underside of his life that had been strewn across the fourth floor of a warehouse.”¹ Grigely's continued investigation unearthed the two only known paintings by Battcock in existence.

Gregory Battcock (1937 - 1980) was an artist, art historian and art critic and a prominent figure of the New York art scene in the 1960s and 70s. Trained as a painter with a PhD in Arts Education from New York University, he championed the work of his contemporaries and wrote important essays on conceptual, video and performance art as well as a seminal anthology on *Minimal Art* (1968) that documented the movement in its infancy. With an interest in film and cinema, Battcock starred in several films by his friend, Andy Warhol, including 'Batman Dracula' (1964) and 'Horse' (1965). He became Editor of *Arts Magazine* in 1974 and also published key essays in such underground publications as *Gay*, the *New York Review of Sex and Politics* and the *New York Free Press*. On Christmas Eve 1980, Battcock was found stabbed to death in his holiday home in Puerto Rico. The murder remains unsolved.



¹ Grigely, Joseph, 'The Gregory Battcock Archive, 2009 – 2014' in Stuart Comer, Anthony Elms & Michelle Grabner, *Whitney Biennial 2014* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2014), 182.

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With much of the estate donated to the Archives of American Art, the intervention comprises originals, duplicates and facsimiles of the various ephemera of Battcock's life detailing his writing practice, travels, relationships with artists and his engagement with gay New York life. The source material is reconfigured for each intervention in a grid-like formation that presents a non-linear, dynamic representation of Battcock: as Grigely has noted, 'from these fragments we can construct a portrait that is revealing in its incompleteness'.² The documents are presented within bespoke hardwood cases of various sizes and shapes



allowing the viewer to come to know Battcock phenomenologically as much as anecdotally, as they navigate the labyrinth of modular vitrines. Interwoven with interpretation panels written by the artist, the installation challenges, in each telling, our conception of the archive as a static entity and creates multiple context-related readings that oscillate between the objective items and their subjective display.

The Gregory Battcock Archive is borne out of Grigely's wider practice that juxtaposes the everyday traces of human interactions into installations that recall the trope of the still life. In the early 1990s, the artist began work on his ongoing series, 'Conversations with the Hearing' in which he creates carefully composed grids out of scraps of paper and handwritten notes that explore the slippages in language and communication. In a digital world of screens and fonts, the sensuous nature of handwriting, paper and their organisation ranges from more intimate wall-based pieces to immersive rooms that appeal as much to the senses as the intellect.

Joseph Grigely (b. 1956, East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, USA) studied at St Anselm's College, 1978 before being awarded a DPhil from Oxford University in 1984. His work has been exhibited at the Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany (2016); the Kunstmuseum, Bern, Germany (2011); the Centre Pompidou Metz, France (2011); Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2009, 1997); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA (2008); the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2001); the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA (2001); De Appel, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (1997) and the Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (1996). His work has been included in the Whitney (2014, 2000), Berlin (2001), Sydney (1998), Istanbul (1997) and Venice (1995) Biennials. He is Professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and lives and works in the city.

This exhibition will run concurrently with Nairy Baghramian, *Scruff of the Neck*, 9 June – 29 July 2016.

The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm. For more information, please contact Charlie Dunnery McCracken on +44 (0)20 7099 0088 or charlie@mariangoodman.com.

² Ibid, 185.