

***Tonic of Wildness at Boesky West, Aspen,
To Feature Recent and Historical Works by Pier Paolo Calzolari,
Donald Moffett, and Günther Uecker***

On View December 13, 2017 – February 19, 2018

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present, at its Aspen location, *Tonic of Wildness*, an exhibition of works by Pier Paolo Calzolari, Donald Moffett, and Günther Uecker. Taking its title from a phrase in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, *Tonic of Wildness* highlights how these three artists are inspired by nature and incorporate the organic into their work. The exhibition will include a selection of Calzolari's signature works composed of elemental materials, new extruded and resin wall works by Moffett, and several of Uecker's nail-relief works as well as his acclaimed tree trunk sculptures, among other recent and historical works by the artists. Displayed together, their works present an international and multi-generational exploration of the natural environment's influence on the creative process. The exhibition will be on view at Boesky West from December 13, 2017 to February 19, 2018.

As one of the original members of the Arte Povera movement, Calzolari embraced the use of readily available, nontraditional materials such as salt, lead, moss, and neon in his artworks. Over his decades-long career, the artist has continued to explore states of matter, transience, and beauty through his choice of materials and containment of the exothermic processes of freezing and combustion. *Tonic of Wildness* will include recent lead wall works, some oxidized and another embellished with paintings of small birds and gold thread, as well as a diptych of moss gathered from the environs of Fossombrone, Italy where the artist lived for many years. On the gallery's second floor will be Calzolari's seminal 1970 work *Combustio*, a double flannel mattress installed flat on the floor emblazoned with the red neon script of "Combustio," a distilled statement of rejuvenation.

Moffett's multidisciplinary practice has been characterized by an engagement and critique of the body politic, often using the canvas as a surrogate for the body. In recent years, he has turned to nature as a source of inspiration, looking to the environment as something much more primal and infinite than humanity itself. With his "spore" series, Moffett has continued his meticulous attention and approach to textures and surfaces. His extruded wall panels, created from an intensive process that requires the oil paint to be pulled into individual tendrils, appear soft and in instances in motion. These are counterbalanced with his glossy, cool, and semi-translucent resin works. In *Tonic of Wildness*, Moffett will present several new works, all completed in the past year, informed by the logic of botany with its diversity of structure, surface, and instinctual attraction.

Throughout his career, Uecker has been interested in repetition and ritual, often incorporating mechanical and rhythmic movements into his artistic process. Since the 1960s, he has been incorporating quotidian nails in his works, piercing them into canvases and other objects in part to reveal properties of light and shadow. *Tonic of Wildness* will demonstrate the diversity of Uecker's nail-relief works, from the geometric order of the nails in his *Serial Nail Object* (1968), to the flowing curves of bent nails in his more recent *Violations-Connections* (2012), where the nails resemble messy handwriting scrawled across a page. The exhibition will also include Uecker's *Bäume* sculptures, for which the artist covered tree trunks with nails and ash, merging the industrial with the organic in order to consider the relationship between humanity and nature. As Uecker has explained, "The inspiration for my work comes from nature – my father was a farmer and I still believe our purpose in life is to bring the fruit from the earth."¹

¹ As quoted by Matthew Wilcox in Apollo Magazine's "Examining the scars of history with Günther Uecker" (February 11, 2017).

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For Thoreau, the necessity of nature is similar. He writes, “We need the tonic of wildness [...] We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features: the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and decaying trees, the thunder cloud, the rain that lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.”

“The work of these artists is undeniably distinct, profound and mesmerizing in its individual vision and execution. Yet when their work is viewed together, there is a fascinating overlap in narrative and shared creative intimacy with the natural world,” said Marianne Boesky. “*Tonic of Wildness* highlights the ongoing dialogue with nature across their practices, while also inviting audiences to experience and engage with the aesthetic quality and intricacy of the work. By bringing together a diversity of artists, in and outside of our program, Boesky West continues to foster conversation about interesting conceptual and formal approaches in contemporary art.”

More About Pier Paolo Calzolari

Pier Paolo Calzolari was born in Bologna, Italy, in 1943. As one of the original members of Arte Povera, he was included in the movement’s seminal 1960s exhibitions curated by Germano Celant. Calzolari’s first exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery in 2012 was the artist’s first in the United States in over 20 years. Calzolari’s works are included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Musée National d’Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Palazzo Grassi, Punta della Dogana Francois Pinault Foundation, Venice, amongst many others. He has been exhibited at the MoMA (1978, 1985), Documenta (1992), the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (2011), and the Centre Pompidou (2016). The artist currently lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal.

More About Donald Moffett

Donald Moffett was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1955. His work is in several permanent institutional collections such as the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; The Menil Collection, Houston, TX; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Moffett has had solo exhibitions across the United States at Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, TX (2016 & 2014); the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX (2015); the Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus, OH (2012); Anthony Meier Fine Art, San Francisco, CA (2011); and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX (2011), which travelled to the Tang Museum at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY and The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, among others. He has also been included in such major group shows as Greater New York (2015) at MoMA PS1, New York, NY; America is Hard to See (2015) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and ICA Collection: Expanding the Field of Painting (2013) at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Boston, MA, among many others. The artist currently lives and works in New York City.

More About Günther Uecker

Günther Uecker was born in Wendorf, Germany, in 1930. The artist’s work is included in the collections of international institutions such as the Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne. Recent exhibitions of Uecker’s work include a large-scale retrospective at K20 am Grabbeplatz, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, in 2015; and a solo exhibition, *Tribute to Hafez*, at the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum, Tehran, in 2016. He was featured prominently in the 2014–15 exhibition *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–60s* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. The artist currently lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

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