

ROBERT HEINECKEN
Object Matter
February 18 - April 9, 2011



Marc Selwyn Fine Art and Cherry and Martin are pleased to present the most extensive gallery exhibition of Robert Heinecken's work in 10 years. Object Matter features numerous rarely seen color and black and white works from the artist's estate. This two gallery exhibition opens on February 18 and continues through April 9, 2011 at Marc Selwyn Fine Art, and runs from February 19 through March 26, 2011 at Cherry and Martin.

Robert Heinecken pushed the boundaries of the photographic medium, breaking through aesthetic and technical limitations to realize photosculpture, conceptual photography, photographic cubism, and new forms of appropriation. This exhibition begins with seminal early work in which Heinecken developed the strategies he would employ throughout his career. Venice Alley, Typographic Nude, Dark Trees, and other works from the sixties demonstrate how the artist explored and broke down the material parameters and physicality of the medium. In Dark Trees, for example, he shot directly into the sun, yet paradoxically produced a dark image through overexposure of the photographic paper. In Venice Alley, he used a transparency to make a contact print, but purposefully left space between the paper and the lithographic film to manipulate the illusion of dimensionality. The exhibition also explores Heinecken's experiments with lithography, ink transfer, photograms, and other innovations that merge commercial printing and photographic processes.

More recent work in the show highlights Heinecken's commentary on broadcast media through direct appropriation of televised imagery. Surrealism on TV and This Is Only A Test from the mid 1980's are composed of grids in which images shot directly from television broadcasts are arranged by the artist and mounted behind plastic overlays of television sets. With juxtapositions determined by the artist, Heinecken's quotations from television transmissions comment on how the media has infiltrated and transformed our culture.

In discussing Heinecken's work, Roberta Smith wrote in the artist's New York Times obituary:

"Instead of treating photographs as the autonomous creations of their makers, as did Ansel Adams and other postwar tastemakers, he viewed them as forms of cultural iconography that reflected the commercialism and venality of contemporary life. In this sense, he was a forerunner of

appropriationist artists of the 1980's like Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine and Richard Prince, who borrowed and recontextualized existing photographic images culled from printed reproductions."

As James Welling observed in 2006:

"By selecting and reprinting preexisting imagery, Heinecken developed an elegant and economical strategy for exploring various American cultural obsessions: war, sex, and food. He created images by contact printing pages of mass-market magazines so that both sides of the magazine page are superimposed. Anticipating the work of image appropriators Martha Rossler, Richard Prince, Silvia Kolbowski, and others, Heinecken (along with his peers, John Baldessari, Ed Ruscha, and Andy Warhol) ushered postmodernism in with a bang. That photography is now on an equal footing with painting and sculpture, video and performance art is, in no small part, due to Heinecken's groundbreaking work."

Robert Heinecken received his BA (1959) and MFA (1960) from the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1960 he was hired by U.C.L.A. and taught in the art department for the next 31 years, where he founded the department's photography program (1964). Heinecken's work was recently the subject of a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago (2007) and a 35-year retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1999) that toured to the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art that same year. His work has also recently appeared in *Starburst: Color Photography in America 1970-1980* and *In Numbers: Serial Publications by Artists since 1955*. Cherry and Martin and Marc Selwyn Fine Art are proud to co-represent the estate of Robert Heinecken.