

# JUMEX COLLECTION IN FOCUS / ALLEN RUPPERSBERG WHAT IS A PRINT?

ORGANIZED BY JULIETA GONZÁLEZ  
CURATORIAL ASSISTANT: GABRIEL VILLALOBOS  
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MUSEO JUMEX, GALLERY 2B.

From November 5 to February 7, 2016, Museo Jumex will present the exhibition *JUMEX COLLECTION: IN FOCUS / Allen Ruppertsberg: What is a Print?*, which initiates an exhibition series, *In Focus*, devoted to the study of different aspects of the collection through diverse exhibition formats, including the presentation of works by a single artist.

On this occasion, the work of Allen Ruppertsberg is the object of this curatorial exercise. The Jumex Collection has a significant representation of his work, which includes important recent installations, making it thus possible for the museum to present a wide-ranging overview of his production in the past two decades.

The title of this exhibition, *What is a Print?*, refers to the extensive use that Ruppertsberg has made of the printed medium throughout almost 5 decades of artistic production, and includes a series of works in the Jumex Collection in which printed matter plays a fundamental role. The work that gives the title to the exhibition, *What is a Print?* (2000), contains a series of reflections by the artist on the printed medium. These questions shape the organization of the exhibition which shows the manifold ways in which the artist deploys the multiple functions and possibilities of the printed medium. The large-scale installations *The Singing Posters: (2003-2005)* and *Letter to a Friend (1997)* are the central works in this exhibition, not only by virtue of their importance in Ruppertsberg's production of the past two decades but also because they offer a significant representation of the way the artist approaches the printed medium.

*The Singing Posters* pays homage to Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl* (1955-1956), hallmark of the Beat Generation. Ruppertsberg produces a piece in which the phonetic transcription of the text, and the use of colors and typeface families that were reminiscent of street posters in LA, converge to create a feeling of visual dissonance that echoes the imagery of Ginsberg's poem. *Howl* was a controversial due to its crude and decadent depiction of American society, and was the object of an obscenity trial in 1957.

## IN FOCUS / ALLEN RUPPERSBERG

### WHAT IS A PRINT?

An affective dimension permeates Ruppertsberg's relation to objects, history, and culture, something that can be appreciated in his constant homage to friends, people and places that have been of personal significance to him. In fact, the homage is a way of establishing affective bonds with his referential universe and the everyday culture that surrounds him. The installation *Letter to a Friend* operates precisely within this register. Originally conceived for a solo show at Portikus, Frankfurt, in 1997, Ruppertsberg intervened the space with a vinyl tile flooring consisting of black and white tiles, some of them embossed with letters, which spell out words of his "letter." The work pays tribute to different personalities that died in 1997 and that in one way or another were close to or influential for the artist. The letter basically enumerates the names and dates of birth and death of these figures: artists Martin Kippenberger, Douglas Huebler, James Lee Byars, Willem de Kooning; writers Kathy Acker, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg; architect Aldo Rossi; actors Robert Mitchum, and Toshiro Mifune, among others.

The other works included in the exhibition share not only this interest in the graphic medium as a singular, expressive vehicle in Ruppertsberg's oeuvre, but also the conceptual operations that underline his interest in popular culture and the affective dimension of his work, showing how through these filters the artist outlines his own vision of the history and context he has experienced throughout his career.

The presentation of this group of works in the Jumex Collection affords the opportunity of generating a series of public programs around the book, the text, visual poetry, graphic work, pedagogy and popular culture. Such programs organized by the education and curatorial departments of the museum will be offered throughout the duration of the show.

## IN FOCUS / ALLEN RUPPERSBERG

### WHAT IS A PRINT?

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Allen Ruppertsberg was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1944. He studied art at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles, California, today known as CalArts. Early on he manifested a profound interest in popular culture and everyday life, producing works that seek to highlight our experience of the commonplace. Ruppertsberg has repeatedly stated his interest in the ephemeral by taking on the role of a *collector*; of postcards, magazines, newspaper clippings, posters, calendars, popular literature, obituaries, and memorabilia. The democratization of the art object and of the aesthetic experience are central in his extensive production.

#### ABOUT THE CURATOR

Julieta González is Chief Curator and Interim Director at Museo Jumex, Mexico City, and Adjunct Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at MASP, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Between 2012 and 2015 she was senior curator at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, and Adjunct Curator at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York. From 2009 to 2012 she was associate curator of Latin American Art at Tate Modern.

She was also curator of contemporary art at the Alejandro Otero museums (1999-2001) and Fine Arts of Caracas (1994-1997 y 2001-2003), adjunct curator of Insite San Diego/Tijuana 2005, co-curator of the 2da Trienal Poligráfica de San Juan, with Jens Hoffman and Beatriz Santiago, under the artistic direction of Adriano Pedrosa. She has organized more than 40 exhibitions, edited various publications and artist books, and written essays for international publications and catalogs including *Afterall*, *The Exhibitionist*, *Flash Art* and *Parkett*. She holds a Masters in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths, was Helena Rubinstein Curatorial Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program (1997-1998), and studied architecture at the Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas, and the École d'Architecture Paris-Villemin, in Paris.

Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo was created to promote the production, discussion and knowledge of contemporary art and to generate innovative ways to foster art and culture. The Foundation carries out this work through Colección Jumex, the Foundation's art collection; Museo Jumex, a new venue for the exhibition and activation of contemporary art; Galería Jumex Ecatepec, an experimental exhibition space; and Editorial Jumex, a platform for the publication and dissemination of contemporary art discourse. Additionally, Fundación Jumex promotes its mission through three complementary program areas: Fomento, dedicated to supporting the production of contemporary art and independent projects, education and research; Investigación, dedicated to research and analysis of contemporary culture; and Educación, committed to enhancing the visitor's ability to understand and appreciate contemporary art.

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#### HOURS & ADMISSION

Entrance: \$30 nationals; \$50 foreigners; 50% discount for students and teachers (with a valid ID); Free for children under 15 and people over 60 years of age (with a valid ID); Free every Sunday.

Hours of operation: Tuesday through Sunday, 11AM to 8PM.

#### PRESS

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