

# JACK RUTBERG FINE ARTS

357 N. La Brea Avenue · Los Angeles, CA 90036 · Tel (323) 938-5222 · www.jackrutbergfinearts.com

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

*Letters from Los Angeles:*

*Text in Southern California Art*

November 17 - December 22, 2012

For more information contact:

Jack Rutberg (323) 938-5222

[jrutberg@jackrutbergfinearts.com](mailto:jrutberg@jackrutbergfinearts.com)

## **LETTERS FROM LOS ANGELES: TEXT IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ART**

**Paintings Drawings Prints Sculpture**

### **EXHIBITION OPENS**

**NOVEMBER 17, 2012**

**OPENING RECEPTION 5:00 - 8:00 PM**

**AT JACK RUTBERG FINE ARTS**

Los Angeles, CA - Jack Rutberg Fine Arts in Los Angeles will present an expansive exhibition titled "**Letters from Los Angeles: Text in Southern California Art**" which will include works by more than thirty contemporary L.A.-based artists who incorporate elements of words and letters in their work. Co-curated by Aldis Browne and Jack Rutberg, the exhibition opens with a reception on Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 8:00 PM, with a number of the artists in attendance. The exhibition runs through Saturday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> at Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, located at 357 North La Brea Avenue.

L.A.'s association with typography in the visual arts is perhaps unique. Text has historically been ubiquitous on the city's streets with political and gang graffiti, and L.A.'s ever-present billboards that surfaced as far back as the onset of Southern California's car culture and highway system.

While other cities are represented by monumental structures such as New York's Empire State building, the Acropolis in Athens, Big Ben in London and the Eiffel Tower in Paris, L.A.'s most prominent symbols are text – most iconic is the Hollywood Sign, along with the great movie studio logos of MGM, 20th Century Fox, Warner Brothers, etc, which have been familiar to billions of people in each generation around the world for nearly a century. So it is perhaps understandable that Los Angeles has a pronounced affinity for the usage of text in the visual arts which distinguishes it from its historic precedents.

Typography in modern art first surfaced in the last decades of the 19th century when artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Cheret and Steinlen portrayed the demi-monde of Paris and in the process celebrated specific cafes, performers and liquors and other commercial products. Later, the abstract use of



Ed Ruscha, *Landmark Decay*, 2006 (top)

*Further Landmark Decay*, 2006 (bottom)

typography appeared in many art movements of the 20th century, from the Russian Constructivists and Bauhaus, Dada, Surrealists and Pop art movements.

The contemporary artists featured in this “**Letters from Los Angeles**” exhibition have used text in extraordinarily diverse ways: immortalizing L.A.'s signs, streets and gas stations, using comic book captions to convey dramatic angst, juxtaposing text with appropriated images, framing collages with wry observations and titles, employing the power of language to pose disquieting comments in conceptual works; surrealist re-configuring of old prints and clippings with snatches of verse and prose. The range of approaches is as individual as the artists themselves. The vast and diverse ways Southern California artists incorporate words, numerals and text into their compositions reflects an aesthetic that might be seen as a logical antecedent to the current spotlight on contemporary-graffiti and tattoo art.

Artists included in "**Letters from Los Angeles: Text in Southern California Art**" are:

Lita Albuquerque, John Baldessari, Bill Barminski, Wallace Berman, Chris Burden, Hans Burkhardt, Huguette Caland, Doug Edge, Mark X Farina, Jud Fine, Llyn Foulkes, Eve Fowler, Gajin Fujita, Scott Grieger, Mark Steven Greenfield, Raul Guerrero, George Herms, Dennis Hopper, Ed Kienholz, Barbara Kruger, Lynn Hanson, Charles LaBelle, Mark Licari, Michael C. McMillen, Jim Morphesis, Bruce Nauman, Stas Orlovski, David Allan Peters, Paulin Paris, Raymond Pettibon, Lari Pittman, Ken Price, Bruce Richards, Ed Ruscha, Richard Shelton, Alexis Smith, J. Michael Walker, Gordon Wagner, Tom Wudl and others.

"**Letters from Los Angeles: Text in Southern California Art**" opens November 17, and extends through December 22 at Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, located at 357 N. La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM and Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday. For further information, phone (323) 938-5222 or email [jrutberg@jackrutbergfinearts.com](mailto:jrutberg@jackrutbergfinearts.com)

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Visual images for press purposes available on request