

# 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-Part II*  
*Identity & Self-Identity Through Text in Art*  
March 9 – April 30, 2013

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## LETTERS FROM LOS ANGELES Part II

**Identity & Self-Identity Through Text in Art**

**Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Sculpture**

**EXHIBITION OPENS - March 9, 2013**  
**ARTISTS' RECEPTION - MARCH 16, 5:00 - 8:00 PM**

Los Angeles, CA - Jack Rutberg Fine Arts in Los Angeles will present an expansive exhibition titled "**Letters from Los Angeles: Part II – Identity & Self**

**Identity Through Text in Art**" which will include more than 70 works by 40 contemporary L.A. based artists who incorporate elements of words and letters in their work. The exhibition runs through April 30 at Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, located at 357 North La Brea Avenue.

The exhibition is a re-envisioning of the specially-commissioned 'museum' show curated by Jack Rutberg which served as the centerpiece for the 2013 LA Art Show. That "**Letters from Los Angeles**" exhibition, with more than 100 works, garnered enormous attention and attendance, receiving critical accolades for the unique perspective it brought to the subject of L.A.'s international identity and self-identity. The exhibition's broad range of works from Southern California artists illustrates how text has insinuated itself into the most disparate expressions of L.A. artists and how letters and numerals populate their sense of place.

L.A.'s association with typography in the visual arts is 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 highway system car culture. While Los Angeles' international recognition is acknowledged via text, it must be noted that Angelinos also self-identify with text, as no other city in the world refers to itself in both the written and spoken word so distinctly and interchangeably as we do with the initials: "**L.A.**"

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 worldwide to billions of people through generations 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.



Alexandra Grant oil on canvas, 2009  
*Body (13), After Michael Joyce's "Thigh"*

Typography in modern art first surfaced in the last decades of the 19th century when artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Cheret and Steinlen, through their color lithographic posters, portrayed the demi-monde of Paris and in the process celebrated specific cafes, performers, liquors, and other commercial products. Later, the abstract use of typography appeared in many art movements of the 20th century as exemplified by 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 works; surrealist re-configuring of old prints and clippings with snatches of verse and prose often dealing with anti-war, racial and gender issues. 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: Part II - Identity & Self-Identity Through Text in Art"** are: Lita Albuquerque, Bill Barminski, Wallace Berman, Hans Burkhardt, Huguette Caland, Greg Colson, Doug Edge, Mark X Farina, Jud Fine, Alexandra Grant, Eve Fowler, Scott Grieger, Mark Steven Greenfield, Raul Guerrero, Lynn Hanson, George Herms, Iva Hladis, Dennis Hopper, Corita Kent, Ed Kienholz, Charles LaBelle, Mark Licari, Michael C. McMillen, Jim Morphesis, Ed Moses, Bruce Nauman, Stas Orlovski, Paulin Paris, David Allan Peters, Raymond Pettibon, Ken Price, Bruce Richards, Ed Ruscha, Allen Ruppensberg, Richard Shelton, Alexis Smith, Masami Teraoka, J. Michael Walker, and Tom Wudl.

**"Letters from Los Angeles: Part II - Identity & Self-Identity Through Text in Art"** opens March 9. A reception for the artists will be held on Saturday, March 16 from 5:00 until 8:00 p.m. The exhibition extends through April 30 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