

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCREEN MEMORY



RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER | WALLACE BERMAN | SARA Cwynar | JAMIAN JULIANO-VILLANI | MIKE KELLEY | WILLIAM LEAVITT | SHERRIE LEVINE | DENNIS OPPENHEIM | ALLEN RUPPERSBERG | JIM SHAW | STURTEVANT | STEPHEN SUTCLIFFE

**10 FEBRUARY – 11 MARCH 2017
PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY**

Simon Lee Gallery is delighted to announce *Screen Memory*, a group exhibition that explores how artists across generations have engaged with the complex notion of collective memory.

Screen Memory traces a divergent path through this broad-ranging subject, alighting upon the idiosyncratic, melancholic, traumatic and humorous affects of retrieving and reconstructing imagery from our shared histories. The exhibition title is a Freudian term for a particular recollection that masks deeper psychologically significant memories. Within Freud's theorem memories overlay and obscure each other, but vestiges of these hidden layers surface and coalesce creating a constructed and distorted recollection. Here, the theory is used as a loose analogy for the ways in which the art object is a site where shared and personal memories entwine - particularly in an age when memory is increasingly defined through our relationship to mass media. It also refers to the kinds of flat surfaces and literal screens used within the exhibition – in this way, these screens can be seen as planes in which latent and manifest content are contiguous and the distinction between collective and personal content is blurred.

Richard Artschwager considered celotex to be like 'paper on a grand scale'. The coarse fibres of the material seem to magnify the surface of his paintings, breaking the image up as if looking at newsprint under a microscope. *Supper*, (1981) depicts a typically prosaic scene for Artschwager; a grisaille still life of two empty chairs, a table and two empty dinner plates. Arranged in compound perspective, Artschwager skews our comprehension of space, and renders the everyday scene strangely unfamiliar. The natural graininess of the celotex draws us out of the perspectival space and onto the flat surface plain, further neutralising the content and making the image object-like.

Similarly, **Sara Cwynar** is interested in foregrounding the physicality of an images surface, accentuating materiality in a way that destabilizes the cohesion of media and content. In *Man 1, Man 2 and Woman 1*, (2015) Cwynar has taken the photograph on a circuitous journey of physical and digital manipulation before finally scanning, ending up with a flat image once again. Drawing from old commercial and documentary photography, she plays with the artifice of photography, re-photographing, scanning and manipulating existing imagery, and probing the constructed nature of nostalgia and memory in the photographic realm.

Nostalgia and reconstructive nature of memory are also explored, albeit with a twist of sardonic humour, in

12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

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Mike Kelley's lenticular lightbox *Lenticular 4*, (2007). Part of a series that was based on imagery from Superman comics, Kandor layers his recurring theme of the homestead and domestic architecture with pop cultural mythology. Taking an illustration from the comic that depicts the city of Superman's birth shrunken and trapped beneath a glass bell-jar, Kelley magnifies the poignancy and metaphoric potential of this image, now symbolizing a traumatic yearning for a past we can't reach. The inconsistency of Kandor's comic book renderings also appealed to Kelley, with each artist depicting it differently, so in a sense it became an even more generalized and idealized form. This idea is substantiated by the effect of the lenticular, as Kandor becomes a constantly shifting and incomplete vision of the past. Conversely Kelley explicitly rebuked any reading of his craft series that associated the works with childhood trauma or repression. The sculptural assemblage *Frankenstein* (1989) was borne out of his interest in traditional craft objects as embodiments of value, namely a low grade, lightweight plebian value, loaded with guilt and sentimentality. However, it was the continued 'misreading' of this series of sculptures as ciphers for repressed memory that led him to abandon the project and set about making works that explicitly dealt with and satirized popular conceptions of memory and trauma.

Like Kelley, **Jamian Juliano-Villani** also interlaces the low grade and excessive imagery of pop culture with personal biography. *The Prophecy*, (2016) depicts the view from a nylon tent as a stork delivers a baby in a Forever 21 polythene bag, echoing the bizarre biblical citation on each bag, John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son". Her compositions of familiar and generic iconography often feel like they've come from the recent past, part Norman Rockwell part *La Planete Sauvage*, yet hold nostalgia at bay layered with self consciously bad jokes and both enigmatic and clunky symbolism; a kind of detournement as internet shit-post.

By contrast **Sherrie Levine's** appropriation technique is withdrawn and less concerned with augmenting the meaning of her sources. *Untitled (Mr. Austridge: 3)*, (1989) is one of a series of seven works, each almost exactly the same except for the type of wood support used. The image painted in casein is a character of an ostrich, originally drawn by George Herriman and taken from the iconic cartoon *Krazy Kat*. Hiding his head in a pot, the image of Mr Austridge seems to restate the hermeticism of the work as a conceptual art object.

Sturtevant, in typically recursive and cryptic ways, references the history of her own practice and that of other artists in the collage *Ça va aller (Casino Luxembourg)*, (1999). Fragmentary images of Duchamp's 1950 monograph 'Eau & gaz à tous les étages' and Robert Gobers tombstone-like sinks make enigmatic allusions to memorials, biography, domestic sanitation and mortality, while photographs from a performance at Air De Paris in 1998, in which the artist and the curators Jean-Yves Jouannais, Bernard Blistène, Michel Bourrel and Nicolas Bourriaud dressed as the Blues Brothers (which was a restaging of an earlier performance), alongside images from the World Cup evince a turn in her work, away from the replication of other artists works toward the commercial world of mass media.

Telemetry Set, (2016) by **William Leavitt** continues his exploration of the vernacular architecture and interior design of L.A's recent past. An arrangement of props, projections and faux bamboo and other decorative furnishings make direct reference to the entertainment industry, giving the impression of a make-shift talk show studio.

The idea of culture as a broadcast can also be seen in **Wallace Berman's** verifax collage *Untitled*, (1964-76). The image of a hand-held Sony transistor radio acted as a frame onto which he collaged a panoply of images that had been cut from newspapers. Berman was struck by the Jean Cocteau play *Orphee*, in which a radio acts as a device that transmits spectral voices from the afterlife; the idea of the radio as arcane technology that connects earthly realm to the sublime is the leitmotif of the Verifax collages.

In *Beware the Eyes That Hypnotise*, (2016) **Jim Shaw** has extracted an image from the infernal regions of the British public psyche. Jimmy Saville's head floats in front of a brick wall and, behind tinted glass – overlaid with his catchphrase 3 times, 'NOW THEN', giving the impression of the kitschy opening credits of a 70's TV show yet reading rhythmically, like a spell or incantation. This is Saville conjured as Crowley-esque mesmerizer, and Shaw ratchets the schlock horror further by embedding references to the 1967 British horror film *Village of the Damned*.

Stephen Sutcliffe's film *Scenes from the Life of an Impatient Man*, (2015) also peruses the darker recesses of recent British history. The imagery is from a notoriously bizarre sequence of images that were published surrounding the suspicious death of 'spy in the bag' Gareth Williams, in which a reporter demonstrated how he could zip himself inside a hold-all when in a bath, just as the MI6 Agent was found. Over this the voice of poet Christopher Logue recollects moments from his life as if they were scenes from short films. Each image is folded, echoing the bodily contortions of the reporter – the imagery resounding with the sense of pathos and finitude in Logues reading, recorded just before his death.

In Sutcliffe's *Untitled*, (2011), Saul Steinberg points to another kind of finitude that of the realm of original thought. As with the other works in Sutcliffe's corpus, this piece aptly and reflexively addresses the nature of authenticity, originality and self doubt - appropriating motifs from a cartoon in which a creative suffers from writers block, his thoughts cancelled at the moment of inception.

Jacques Derrida, in his 1995 book *Archive Fever* presented the archive not as the guarantor of memory, but rather the point at which memory itself begins to breakdown. The negative effects documentation and archiving has on memory has been explored elsewhere; Marshall McLuhan's concept of mass media as a memory prosthesis (which extends and at the same time amputates) and even more fundamentally with Socrates' assertion that writing itself 'will create forgetfulness in the learners soul'. This air of erasure or amnesia pervades many of the works in the exhibition, not least in the work of **Allen Ruppertsberg**. *Poems & Placemats*, (2008) is a collection of laminated menus, newspaper clippings, poetry and other memorabilia that combines Ruppertsberg's interest in the written word and ephemera. As print media becomes increasingly obsolete these laminated cast-offs become memorials, lose their particularity and become generalized relics of a previous era.

In writing about Ruppertsberg's works Allen McCollum proposed that the text becomes 'a vehicle for our collective forgetting' - this absence is literalized in *Little Trouble*, a reconstructed mail-art work from 1967 in which the panels of reprinted Scrooge McDuck comics have large central sections removed, like an incomplete recollection.

Dennis Oppenheim's shaky recollections of his formative art school years are the basis of *Recall*, (1974). The installation comprises a metal tank of black turpentine and a monitor displaying the artists mouth as he delivers an intoxicated stream of consciousness monologue as he inhales turpentine fumes. *Recall* creates a complex layering of different temporalities, the immediacy of the smell, the recorded performance, and the artist's voice casting back through his past. The turpentine fumes are a medium to pungently bind the viewers associations with the artists; a rambling, fragmentary reminiscence, infused with dry humour and melancholy.

The appropriation art of the post-modern era tended toward a hijacking or disfiguring of mass media images and a sense of psychological distance. *Screen Memory* however focuses on the lateral and idiosyncratic aspects of quotation and recollection; from the flat affect of simulation and the disquieting effects of fragmentary reminiscence, to the absurd and humorous distortions and ruptures as familiar images intertwine with flights of imagination.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Richard Artschwager was born in 1923, Washington D.C and died in 2013 in Albany, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Punctuating Space: The Prints and Multiples of Richard Artschwager*, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, NY (2015); *Richard Artschwager* (Curated by Adam McEwen), David Nolan Gallery, New York, NY (2014) ; *Richard Artschwager: No More Running Man*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY (2014); *Richard Artschwager!*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany and Monaco National Musée Nouveau, Monaco (2012) and *Hair*, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2010).

Wallace Berman was born in 1926, Staten Island, NY and died in 1976 in Los Angeles, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include *Wallace Berman: Be-bop Kabbalah*, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, France (2010); *Wallace Berman, 1926 – 1976*, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, NY (2009); *Wallace Berman*, Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2008); *Semina Culture*, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive BAM/PFA, Berkeley, CA (2006); *Aleph - A Film by Wallace Berman*, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2005); *Wallace Berman - Art Is*

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Love Is God - une introduction - 1957- 1976, Mamco - musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, CH (2000). Selected group exhibitions include *Beat Generation*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2016); *LA RAW: Abject Expressionism in Los Angeles 1945-1980: From Rico Lebrun to Paul McCarthy*, The Pasadena Museum of California Art, Pasadena, CA (2012); *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A., 1945-1980*, The Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA and Martin Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany (2012); *All of the Above: Carte Blanche a John M Armleder*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2011); *Looking for Mushrooms*, Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany (2008) and *Trace du Sacre*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2008).

Sarah Cwynar was born in 1985, Vancouver, Canada and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Presidential Index*, Retrospective, Hudson, New York, NY (2015); *FLAT DEATH*, Foxy Production, New York, NY (2014), Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery at The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto, Canada (2013) and *Everything in the Studio (Destroyed)*, Foam Photography Museum, Amsterdam, NL (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *Tell Me What I Mean. To ___Bridges___*, Bronx, NY (2016); *L'Image Volee* curated by Thomas Demand, The Prada Foundation, Milan, Italy (2016); *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, New York, NY (2015) and *Never Enough: Recent Acquisitions in Contemporary Art*, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX (2014). In 2017 she will have a solo exhibition at the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany.

Jamian Julliano-Villani was born in 1987, Newark, NJ and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *The World's Greatest Planet on Earth*, Studio Voltaire, London, UK (2016); *Nudge the Judge*, Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany (2015); *Crypod*, JTT, New York, NY (2015); *Detroit Affinities*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, MI (2015). Selected group exhibitions include *ANIMALITY - A Fairy Story by Jens Hoffmann*, Marian Goodman Gallery, London, UK (2016); *FADE IN: INT. ART GALLERY - DAY*, Swiss Institute, New York, NY (2016); *A Shape That Stands Up*, Hammer Museum (Off-Site), Los Angeles, CA (2016); *Flatlands*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2016); *Unorthodox*, Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2015) and *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, New York, NY (2015).

Mike Kelley was born in 1954, Detroit, MI and lived and worked in Los Angeles, CA from 1972 until his death in 2012. Recent solo exhibitions include *Mike Kelley: Memory Ware*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY (2016); *Mike Kelley: Kandors*, VENUS, New York, NY (2016); *Mike Kelley*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2014), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2013), Museum of Modern Art/PS1, New York, NY (2013) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL (2012); *Mobile Homestead and Goin' Home: Mike Kelley's Mobile Homestead Videos and Documentation*, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, MI (2013); *A Tribute to Mike Kelley*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2012) and *Mike Kelley: Kandors*, Museen Haus Lange and Haus Esters, Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Krefeld, Germany (2011).

William Leavitt was born in Washington, D.C in 1941 and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include *Telemetry*, Greene Naftali, New York, NY (2016); *Sidereal Time*, Institute of the History and Theory of Architecture, ETH, Zürich, CH (2014); *William Leavitt: Theater Objects*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2011) and *William Leavitt: Warp Engines*, LAXART, Los Angeles, CA (2009). Selected group exhibitions include *Los Angeles - A Fiction*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway (2016); *On Limits: Estrangement in the Everyday*, The Kitchen, New York, NY (2016); *Fade in: Int. Art Gallery - Day*, Swiss Institute Contemporary Art, New York, NY (2016); *America Is Hard to See*, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY (2015); *Liverpool Biennial*, Liverpool, UK (2014) and *Taking Place*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL (2010).

Sherrie Levine was born in 1947, Hazelton, PA and lives and works between New York and Santa Fe. Recent solo exhibitions include *After All*, Neues Museum Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany (2016); *Sherrie Levine: African Masks After Walker Evans*, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Sherrie Levine: Red Yellow Blue*, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY (2014); *Sherrie Levine*, The Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR (2013); *Sherrie Levine: Mayhem*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2011); *Pairs and Posses*, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany (2010).

Dennis Oppenheim was born in 1938, Electric City, WA and died in New York, NY in 2011. Recent solo exhibitions include *Projections*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2016); *Difference Lab*, MAMCO, Geneva, CH (2015); *Dennis Oppenheim*, MOT International, London, UK (2014); *Through Collision Theories*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK (2013) and Museo Pecci Milano, Milan, Italy (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *Forty*, MoMA PS1, New York, NY (2016); *Codex*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA

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(2014); *Art or Sound*, Fondazione Prada, Venice, Italy (2014); *Monolithic Water*, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, CH (2014) and *Light Years, Conceptual Art and the Photograph 1964-1977*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2011).

Allen Ruppertsberg was born in 1944, Cleveland, OH and lives and works in New York and Santa Monica, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include *What is a Stamp?*, Jumex Foundation of Contemporary Art, Mexico City (2015); *The Singing Posters*, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA (2015); *FOR COLLECTORS ONLY (everyone is a collector)*, greengrassi, London, UK (2014); *No Time Left to Start Again and Again*, WIELS, Institute for Contemporary Art, Brussels, Belgium (2014); *The Never Ending Book*, Tate, St Ives, Cornwall, UK (2013); *The Birth and Death of Rock n' Roll*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2013) and Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2008). Recent group exhibitions include *Codex*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2014); *In Parts*, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY (2013) and *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, Fondazione Prada, Venice, Italy (2013).

Jim Shaw was born in 1952, Midland, MI and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include *The End is Here*, The New Museum, New York, NY (2016); *Entertaining Doubts*, MASS MoCA, West Adams, MA (2015); *Jim Shaw*, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Jim Shaw: The Hidden World*, Centre Dürrenmatt, Neuchâtel, CH (2014) and Chalet Society, Paris, France (2013); *Jim Shaw's Dream Drawings*, LACMA, Los Angeles, CA (2012); *The Rinse Cycle*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2012) and *Left Behind*, CAPC, Musée de'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2010). In 2013 his work was included in *The Encyclopedic Palace* at The 55th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. In 2017 he will have a solo display of new works at The Marciano Foundation, Los Angeles, CA.

Elaine Sturtevant was born in 1924, Lakewood, OH and died in 2014, Paris, France. Recent solo exhibitions include *Drawings: 1964-1994*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France (2016); *The House of Horrors (le Train fantôme)*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France, (2015); *Sturtevant Sturtevant*, Museo Madre, Naples, Italy (2015); *Drawing Double Reversal*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt, Germany (2014), Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany and Albertina, Vienna, Austria (2015); *Double Trouble*, MoMA, New York, NY (2014) and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2015); *Leaps Jumps and Bumps*, Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2013) and *House of Horrors*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2013).

Stephen Sutcliffe was born in 1966, Harrogate, North Yorkshire and lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. Recent solo exhibitions include *Twixt Cup & Lip*, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, North Yorkshire, UK (2016); *Going Over*, Rob Tufnell, London, UK (2015); *Outwork*, Tramway, Glasgow, UK (2013); *Art in the Auditorium*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2010); *Cubitt*, London, UK (2009), *Nought to Sixty*, ICA, London, UK (2008) and *Art Now, Light Box*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2005).

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact Julia Kelly Kennedy: julia@simonleegallery.com / 020 7491 0100.

Image: Wallace Berman, *Untitled*, c. 1964-76, Acrylic, Verifax collage and transfer lettering on board, 33 x 26 cm (13 x 10 ¼ in.), Image courtesy of the Estate of Wallace Berman and Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles.

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