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WRITING ON THE WALL September 27–November 16, 2019

OPENING RECEPTION September 27, 5-7pm

CURATED BY Kylee Aragon Wallis



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RAUSCHENBERG, RUSCHA, RATHMAN AND MORE IN ZANE BENNETT GALLERY'S ODE TO TEXT

(September 2019) Zane Bennett Gallery gathers the text-based work of eight American masters of art on paper: Donald Baechler, Mel Bochner, David X Levine, Robert Motherwell, Bruce Nauman, David Rathman, Robert Rauschenberg and Ed Ruscha. Culled from the Zane Bennett Contemporary Art Collection, the exhibit features recently acquired work by Mel Bochner and Ed Ruscha, marking the artists' first entry in the 2005-founded collection of Zane Bennett Gallery.

Composed of works created in the 1960s through 2010s, *Writing on the Wall* asks viewers to reimagine the dissociative use of language in art as a fundamental component. "What does it mean when you bring words into a composition? What changes? Essentially, it's about shapes." says curator Kylee Aragon Wallis. She recalls a quote by Rauschenberg: "I considered the text of a newspaper, the detail of a photograph, the stitch of a baseball and the filament in a lightbulb as fundamental to the painting as a brushstroke or enamel drip of paint."

"I love that his emphasis here is on the importance of the element. He's influenced by the word and the world." Aragon Wallis continues, "I want to question what a piece that incorporates language is going to look like in 100 years. Rauschenberg's use of newspapers is so of the moment and of his time—we can see how the world was speaking when this piece was made."

Similar snapshots of American idiom can be seen in Ed Ruscha's *Zoot Suit* and Bochner's *Crazy* (with background noise), the latter a gleeful confusion of American slang in west coast colors. "You're relearning how to read in a Bochner. We tend to trust language—we've been reading since we were young, and he forces us to question it. It's not a four-letter word anymore. It's something else."

Rounding out the wordplay are Motherwell's collaged *America - La France Variations VI*, with its signature suggestion of meaning in rips and folds and fragments of type, and Nauman's *Pearl Masque*, a painterly composition encompassing a slightly provocative text that recalls Rauschenberg's insistence on the fundamentals, while still having fun.

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