Jef Geys *!Women's Questions?*1965-2006
Also on view:

Jonas Mekas: *To Barbara Rubin With Love*

Panel Discussion: Feb. 25th, Time: 6:30

Dirk Snauwaert, R. H. Quaytman will discuss the work of Jef Geys.

Book Party: Feb.23, 5-7
Christian Philipp Muller and Philipp Kaiser will present *Christian Philip Muller-Basics*

Jef Geys (b. 1934) is one of Belgium's most esteemed artists. Orchard is honored to present his work for the first time in the U.S. Throughout his long career he has provoked the international art world from a small suburb of Antwerp called Balen. In his practice, Geys insists on a position of radical autonomy through an unprecedented approach to collective creativity often generated by participation with his immediate community. His practice is one that has resisted market and institutional forces from the start.

!Women's Questions? began as a series of socio-political questions hanging on the wall in Geys' classroom where in 1964 he was teaching aesthetics at a local vocational school for girls. The questions generated conversation and debate among the students. In 1965 Geys received an invitation from Balen's Socialist Women's Group to include one painting from his seed packet series. Every year Geys makes a painting depicting the packet of seeds which he has planted in his garden. He agreed to contribute a painting on the condition that they include !Women's Questions? 1965, which they did, so amidst knitting, embroidery, stuffed dolls, and doilies Geys inserted a list of 157 questions with the 158th question left blank, written with black ink on brown paper. Geys has subsequently shown !Women's Questions? in several other contexts in Europe. He has translated the questions from Flemish into English, German, Spanish, Dutch, Hebrew, French and Japanese. For Orchard he made new translations into Chinese, Hindi and Arabic.

This presentation of !Women's Questions? 1965-2007 reveals the importance of the passage of time in relation to the nature of the work's intervention since its first realization while underscoring the feminist movement's successes and failures over the past 40 years. The work's ideas and their

legibility are reinvented and recharged by this temporal and geographic displacement from the context of a European social democracy during the 1960's to Bush's America in 2007.
Geys aesthetics (and ethics) of refusal and urgency--not to be confused with withdrawal--find in Orchard a social and psychological space ideal for the introduction of his work to New York's audience. !Women's Questions? 1965-2007 interrogates the status of the feminist revolution and its influence on contemporary art practice, a set of questions surrounding a political and aesthetic history and their relationship to our present conditions. Similar feminist questions will be raised in Orchard's exhibitions and programs during the gallery's third and final year.

All five of the large works, which are editions, are for sale. As per the artist's instructions, one edition will be donated to Orchard. Proceeds from the sale of the remaining four will go to The Henry Street Settlement. Geys also requested that a short film by Jonas Mekas would be screened during his exhibition at Orchard. Mekas chose To Barbara Rubin With Love (1965-2007). In between screenings Geys stipulated that Boris Vian's anti-war song, Le Deserteur (1955) is played in the gallery.

A discussion of the work of Jef Geys will be held on Sunday, Feb. 25th at 6 pm. Speakers: Dirk Snauwaert, Director of Wiels, Brussels, Belgium and R. H. Quaytman, Director of Orchard.

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