

Martin Wong

Works 1980 - 1998

28 May - 22 August 2010

Opening reception on Friday, 28 May, 7-9 p.m.

Martin Wong (1946-1999) was born in Portland, Oregon and raised in the Chinatown district of San Francisco, California. He studied ceramics at Humboldt State University, graduating in 1968. During the 1970s he was active in the San Francisco Bay Area art scene, and was involved with the performance art groups The Cockettes and Angels of Light. In 1978 he moved to Manhattan, eventually settling in the Lower East Side, where his attention turned exclusively to painting. He was first exhibited in a group show at ABC No Rio in 1982, and went on to have one person shows at Semaphore Gallery, Exit Art and PPOW. Wong was a collector and connoisseur of everything from graffiti to Asian antiquities. His graffiti collection grew to be perhaps the largest in the world; in 1993 he donated it to the Museum of the City of New York. Martin Wong died in San Francisco from an AIDS related illness in 1999.

Martin Wong's works can be found in institutional collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the de Young Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The Martin Wong Papers reside at the Fales Library, New York University, and include sketchbooks, correspondence, biographical documents, video cassette recordings, photos, graffiti-related materials, and parts of Wong's personal library.

With this two part exhibition, the exhibition at Galerie Daniel Buchholz in Cologne is followed by an exhibition at our gallery in Berlin, we are proud to present Martin Wong's work for the first time in Europe. The exhibitions feature paintings by Martin Wong from 1980 to 1998. As well as this, early collages and photographs from the archive of Martin Wong at the Fales Library were selected for the exhibition by the artists Danh Vo and Julie Ault are shown in vitrines and are displayed in the window of the gallery.

To accompany the exhibition we present a video portrait of Martin Wong by filmmaker Charlie Ahearn. Among other things Ahearn is known for his early film 'Wild Style' (1982) documenting the New York Hip Hop and Graffiti scene.