

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Chris Johanson
September 16 – October 21, 2023
Reception: September 16, 2023, 5-7 pm

In a special exhibition, Altman Siegel is pleased to present a monumental and historic work by Chris Johanson. Exhibited for the first time since 2000, this painted triptych, *Untitled*, offers a rare insight into Johanson's early large-scale works.

Known for his observant nature, Johanson was invited to participate in Glen Helfand's 1999 exhibition, "Museum Pieces," about the history of the de Young Museum. The artist agreed to participate, though he stipulated that he "did not make art about museums." Rather, he created an installation inspired by the museum's location in Golden Gate Park.

Following "Museum Pieces," the de Young Museum invited Johanson to host a workshop in Gallery One, an artist's studio within the institution. Over the course of multiple days, he painted in collaboration with visitors to the museum. The resulting street scenes feature figures in Johanson's distinctive, stripped-down style alongside skateboarders, pigs, and frogs which bear the mark of another hand. People poke out of windows and walk along the street, declaring "I like it here," and "A very nice day." The final work is chaotic and hopeful, capturing the vibrancy of San Francisco's local culture while offering an idealistic image of a peaceful society.

At the time of the workshop, Johanson was working out of 68 Shotwell, a San Francisco studio many Mission School artists passed through in the 90s and 00s. The Shotwell studio, which he shared with his partner, Johanna Jackson, and friend and fellow artist, Dave Schubert, was too small for Johanson to paint on large wooden panels. As such, *Untitled* was one of the few large-scale works Johanson created during this period and it is one of the very few which has not been lost or destroyed since.

Safeguarded by Schubert for two decades, *Untitled* was rediscovered by the artist in the last year. Accessible to the public for the first time since its creation, the triptych offers insight into Johanson's early use of color, figuration, and text to capture the essence of the people he interacted with on the streets, emphasizing his early fixation on social documentation. It also serves as a record of community collaboration, joining together the ideologies, images, and energies of its creators to form a collective consciousness.

Chris Johanson's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; MoCA Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; and Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden. Group exhibitions include Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, CA; McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; Benaki Museum, Athens,

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Greece; Museum of Contemporary Art, Santa Barbara, CA; Whitney Biennial, New York, NY; Berlin Biennial, Berlin, Germany; Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey; New Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Drawing Center, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; SITE, Santa Fe, NM; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada; and CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, CA.

For more information please contact info@altmansiegel.com or 415-576-9300.