

PRESS RELEASE

Eleanor Antin: 100 Boots

Richard Saltoun Gallery at Independent
11 – 14 May 2023

Richard Saltoun Gallery presents a solo booth dedicated to the pioneering American artist **Eleanor Antin** (b. 1935). The stand looks back to Antin's celebrated exhibition at MoMA held in 1973, the first museum exhibition devoted to this celebrated work. The exhibition will feature the very same 28 photos which Antin exhibited, shown for the first time since their eponymous exhibition, as well as the 51 photographic postcards that comprise her seminal conceptual work.

Initially conceived as a picaresque novel in the manner of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, *100 Boots* was a work of mail art documenting the staged adventures of 50 pairs of black rubber army boots traveling from California to New York City, mailed to 1,000 -friends, curators, and collectors over a 2 ½ year period via the US postal service. Initially, the boots engage in everyday suburban activities – going to the market, church, and drive-in movies – but eventually, they trespass on private property, symbolically announcing their solidarity with the antiwar movement. The empty boots stand in for the missing body, a somber reference to the rising death toll in Vietnam: by subtly teasing out associations with the violent politics of the time, *100 Boots* strikes with newfound poignancy in 2023.

Considered a powerful conceptual act of institutional critique of America's participation in the Vietnam War, *100 Boots* is exhibited at Independent on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the peace accords. Additionally the stand will include Antin drawings from her *Death and the Maiden* series, dating from the mid 1970s, and inspired by exiled Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden*, about a chance encounter between a former political prisoner and her torturer

Press contacts:

Caterina Berardi
cb@richardsaltoun.com
Sonja Teszler
sonja@richardsaltoun.com

Richard Saltoun Gallery
41 Dover Street
London W1S 4NS
info@richardsaltoun.com
+44 (0) 207 637 1225

Richard Saltoun Gallery
Via Margutta, 48a-48b
00187 Rome
rome@richardsaltoun.com
+39 06 86678 388

www.richardsaltoun.com

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