

Albus Greenspon presents an exhibition of early paintings and recent photographs by Gene Beery opening on Saturday March 16. The current show, the first to include the artist's photographs, complements the gallery's 2010 inaugural exhibition that included both early works and a substantial selection of new paintings.

Recent exhibitions—*Sinister Pop* and the current Jay DeFeo retrospective at the Whitney, *Seductive Subversion* and *Materializing 'Six Years'* at the Brooklyn Museum—are framing a more contextual and inclusive picture of art's evolution during the 1960s. Pop Art, Minimalism, *Neo-Dada* and Conceptual art now appear less like monolithic movements than porous endeavors with interwoven sensibilities that fostered interlocutory forays. Much of this interchange occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the new art was being defined, but continued into the 1970s as regional centers added their own spin to an increasingly rigid canonical output from New York.

Gene Beery's art provides an interesting lens through which to view this unfolding. Beery, a young Wisconsinite working in New York was at the center of the development of both Pop and Conceptual Art. His close friends, James Rosenquist and Sol LeWitt would go on to become exemplars of these movements. Beery cultivated a middle ground, taking this plot with him when he left New York for California in 1964. Once on the west coast, Beery's New York roots sprouted robust stylistic branches joining his exuberant conceptual word play with a graphic Pop Art manner and a Bay Area Funk demeanor.

The current exhibition begins with a pivotal early work – a prone female figure overlain by text – that was a centerpiece of the artist's 1963 debut at New York's Alexander Iolas Gallery. This is followed by boldly colored text + image paintings done in San Francisco in the mid-1960s that in the 1970s transfigure into inscrutable takes on Beery's life as a bemused art world expatriate sequestered amid friends and family in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

It is Gene Beery's concise, waggish perspective that is the gist of his art. So when he began to take snapshots of his home, travel, family and friends in the early 1990s these emerge as a fully defined, organic expression; an independent, satisfying and highly informative coda to a long and productive career. Beery's photographs are at once familiar and totally unexpected giving an insider's visibility and beatific credibility to a segment of American life rarely seen on gallery walls. Deceptively prosaic, these images are in fact a gently touching record of Beery's life that substantially adds to an appreciation of this unusual artist.

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