

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to present an exhibition of work by British artist Keith Arnatt (1930 – 2008) in Berlin, which will be the artist's first solo presentation with Sprüth Magers. The exhibition will showcase photographs from the artist's series *Notes from Jo* (1991 – 1995), in which Arnatt photographed personal notes and domestic reminders written to him by his late wife. Also on display will be work from the series *Labels Borrowed/Stolen* (1993 – 1995), featuring photographs of labels and signs taken from local shops.

Keith Arnatt was one of the UK's leading artists during the emergence of conceptual art in the 1960's and 1970's. His work from this period explores the range of possibilities of meaning and function within art, as well as considering how the perception of an artwork operates in relation to the act of creating a work. The artist's extensive use of photography during this time was mainly to record works whose physicality was connected to specific contexts. From 1973, Arnatt began to develop a growing interest in the camera as an instrument for art making, adopting the camera as his primary tool for producing art rather than simply documenting it. The artist's subsequent photographic series underscore his analytic method of working, and reveal an observational style influenced by his awareness of the typological preoccupations of artists and photographers such as Bernd and Hilla Becher.

The exhibition at Sprüth Magers focuses on the series *Notes from Jo*, in which Arnatt collected and photographed the hand-written messages that his wife Jo left him around the house. Ranging from the mundane to the angry, the instructions reveal the beauty, intimacy and humour of domestic life. Arnatt's preservation of these notes through photographic documentation underlines the artist's distinctive skill of being able to discern the visual and conceptual possibilities of objects and remnants from daily life. Taken out of context and blown up they become surreal, showing Arnatt's understanding that observation could be transformed by the act of isolation. The interest in language recalls Arnatt's earlier conceptual text pieces, and marks a continued investigation of the use of text in image making, playing with how meaning slips from the conceptual to the visual, from the intellectual to the emotional.

*Labels Borrowed/Stolen* is a body of work that the artist created in the same period as *Notes from Jo*. Arnatt took everyday labels and signs from local shops photographing them as objects in his makeshift studio.

The works on show in the exhibition also stand as studies in colour and line. The artist worked first in black and white photography, changing to colour in the mid 1980's. The images within *Notes from Jo* are rendered in colour and composed in a spare, frontal, documentary style. The artist's

sharp eye for specifically pictorial effects can be seen in the red ink of ARCHIE'S GRUB, which collides vividly with the flash of green lining of the envelope on which the words have been scribbled, as well as in the dabbled green effect of the smudged black ink in ME, RING DENTIST.

Keith Arnatt was born in Oxford, UK in 1930. He died in Wales in 2008. Major solo exhibitions include Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1977), Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol (1986), The Photographers' Gallery, London (1989, 2007), CAYC - Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires (1992), XXI Bienal de São Paulo (1991), Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2009), Tate Britain, London (2013).

Major group exhibitions include Seattle Art Museum (1969), Camden Arts Centre, London (1969), Tate Gallery, London (1972), Hayward Gallery, London (1972), MoMA - Museum of Modern Art, New York (1970), Vancouver Art Gallery (1970), Barbican Art Gallery, London (1990), Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2001), Tate Britain, London (2002, 2007), Fundació Joan Miró, Centre d'Estudis d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona (2003), Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2004), Kunstmuseum Bern (2006), MoMA PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2009), Royal Academy of Arts, London (2011), Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2011), MOCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2012).

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