

As a pioneer of West Coast conceptualism, Ruppertsberg has mined the fields of American popular culture and mass media for over forty years, amassing a personal collection of newspaper clippings, photographs, posters, records, and other ephemera from previous eras. Approaching these findings as source material, Ruppertsberg often uses these items as the conceptual starting point for his works, reinterpreting, rearranging, and reconstructing the originals in order to draw out new narratives that simultaneously reference and reanimate the visual language of the past.

For this exhibition, the artist debuts for the first time in New York CIRCLES: Allan Kaprow's Words, 1962, By Allen Ruppertsberg (2008), a reinterpretation of Allan Kaprow's environment from 1962 at the Smolin Gallery. Coined by Kaprow in the '60s, the term "environment" was characterized as being participatory in nature, and aimed to provide viewers with multisensory experiences. Ruppertsberg's version, first exhibited at MOCA Los Angeles on the occasion of the exhibition Allan Kaprow – Art as Life, comprises a wall mural of color and black and white xerox copies of spoken word poetry records from Ruppertsberg's personal collection, along with typewriters and record players arranged on card tables in the main space. Like the original, CIRCLES insists on the central role of the viewer as an active participant: the typewriters are outfitted with motion detectors that signal the digital recordings of poetry, but only at the touch of a key. Visitors to the show are likewise invited to take away copies of the xeroxed pages stacked in silkscreen cardboard boxes—replicas of those wheat pasted on the wall.

Throughout his career, Ruppertsberg has directly referenced artists whose practices have influenced his own. In Rauschenberg (2014), Ruppertsberg expands his obituary series with a new work that honors Robert Rauschenberg. Transcribing the New York Times obituary written by Michael Kimmelman in full, Ruppertsberg celebrates the life of the artist and his contributions to the field of postwar modernism, and to the art world in general. Ruppertsberg's homage, comprising eleven 4 x 4 panels, are each made up of bingo numbers and letters from old anagram games that have been copied and affixed to the boards.

Also on view are new silkscreens from Ruppertsberg's seminal Honey, I Rearranged the Collection series, and El Segundo Record Club (2014), a three-panel pegboard piece presenting a selection of Ruppertsberg's favorite discs from his record club. Established just this year, El Segundo Record Club sells unique CDs and 7" and 10" records of varying editions, each with original sleeves by Ruppertsberg.

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