

Hans Goodrich

A Rose By Any Other Name

Vern Blosum

John Dogg

Pippa Garner

Lynn Hershman Leeson

Larry Johnson

Karen Kilimnik

Maggie Lee

Isabelle Frances McGuire

Genesis Breyer P-Orridge

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“She had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may have many thousand...”

—Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*, 1928

In 1920, Marcel Duchamp first assumed the identity of his female alter-ego Rose Sélavy, who became a published writer and artist in her own right. Her name was derived from a play on words, and her being, a play on gender. Explaining Rose’s origins, Duchamp stated, “I decided that it didn't suffice me to be a lone individual with a masculine name, I wanted to change my name in order to change, for the ready-mades above all, to make another personality from myself.”

In 1948, Hugh de Verteuil immigrated from Trinidad to the United States. Upon settling in Chicago, he opened a family-run seafood restaurant called Hans Goodrich. None of his relatives were named Hans, nor carried the surname Goodrich. De Verteuil selected the name based on its transformative potential. The question is not ‘who was Hans Goodrich’, but, ‘what did Hans Goodrich represent?’ American-values, trustworthiness, prestige, among other pillars of social value necessary to brand building. What’s in a name anyways? Move to Middle America, and reinvent yourself.

The artists in this exhibition contend with the conceit at the core of Duchamp and de Verteuil’s transformations—the malleable nature of identity construction. They collectively present a spectrum and a specter of assumed, self-actualized, or aspirational identity. Several artists address celebrity, public personas, personal mythologies, and idealized selves through their work. Others toy with notions of authorship, operating solo and collaboratively under aliases—engaging in what Duchamp described as the impetus for his readymades: “de-deifying of the artist.”

His-self, her-self, he/r-self, their self. Each self, like Hans Goodrich and Rose Sélavy, are just one among the many thousand.