

On 4 March 2017, Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Chelsea location *Lost Objects* by ALLAN MCCOLLUM. The exhibition, shown in cooperation with Friedrich Petzel Gallery and curated by Piper Marshall, features three bodies of work by McCollum.

“Lost Object” is a term for the process by which children separate from their mother to encounter things. These objects are happened upon, rather than sought out. Such titillating experiences as discovering an old toy in the form of a plastic figurine for instance, burnishes itself into memory and upon recollection, stimulates satisfaction. Objects here are less lost than encountered and re-imagined. McCollum lifts this term from celebrated psychoanalysts to zero-in on the art-object and to show us how it taps into the construction of desire. The savory response that objects elicit plays an important role in how artworks as well as artifacts are acquired, preserved, and presented.

This exhibition couples McCollum’s *Lost Objects* (1991) and *Plaster Surrogates* (1982-present) with the cooperative work “*May I Help You?*” (1991) by Andrea Fraser and the collaboration *Actual Photos* (1985) made with Laurie Simmons. *Lost Objects*, the titular work of the exhibition first exhibited at the 1991 Carnegie International, features 240 cast concrete bones replicated from the fossil collection of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. This sculpture links the contemporary artwork to the natural wonder, establishing a connection between the art institution and its eighteenth century predecessor, the cabinet of curiosities. These bygone exhibition spaces offered an eclectic assortment of oddities, such as dinosaur bones, alongside artworks. Central to McCollum’s work is this rub between artifact and artwork. McCollum first explored this interest with his work *Plaster Surrogates*. Here, exhibited in the gallery foyer alongside Fraser’s performative video, *Plaster Surrogates* isolates the method of framing and casts it. This decision to duplicate via mold joins the frame to its content, yet it does not eradicate the touch of the artist. The result is a form of sculpture synonymous to framed wall work. Fraser’s work picks up on this anomaly. In her work, however, the sculptures serve more as stage props, things on the wall around which the saleswoman pitches a narrative.

The surrogate continues in McCollum and Simmons’s *Actual Photos*, which utilize the lens of a microscope to magnify small-scale plastic figures.

Focused to the point of abstraction, the mass-produced objects are captured at the cusp of visual breakdown. Here the generic product is rendered as an idiosyncratic exception. *Actual Photos* are distinguished for their deformation and their resistance to immediate reading. With this work, McCollum and Simmons hone in on the fragility of everyday things. The artists’ attention to detail reveals those things perceived as “all-alike” are in fact quite unique when scrutinized.

McCollum is a celebrated artist whose work has both utilized and undermined systems of exhibition since the 1970s. This exhibition reconsiders his investigation into the distinctions between artwork, artifact, and vernacular craft and the absorption of desire into our everyday institutions.

Allan McCollum has had solo retrospectives held at major international venues such as the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; Villeneuve-d'Ascq, Lille; Sprengel Museum, Hannover; and Serpentine Gallery, London. His work is in over eighty museum collections worldwide, including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

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