

# **MFC-MICHÈLE DIDIER**



Booth #523

Pier 94 contemporary

From March 5 to 8, 2015

**ROBERT BARRY**

**ON KAWARA**

**MATHIEU MERCIER**

**ANNETTE MESSENGER**

**MUNTADAS**

**ALLEN RUPPERSBERG**

# INTRODUCTION

For its first participation in the Armory show, mfc-michele didier proposes to recreate the atmosphere of a contemporary library modeled on the American library. «A space dedicated to a collection of reading materials such as books, periodicals and newspapers arranged in a certain sequence», that's the first definition of a library.

However, the notion of "library" has several other meanings. Therefore, mfc-michèle didier's booth display will try to play with this polysemy in a subtle way: as a public space, the library is a place for reading, for consultation, for information and research. When a private place, it becomes a space of intimacy and secrets, creating a particular and privileged relationship with its owner.

The impressive installation by **MUNTADAS**, entitled *The Bookstore*, sets the scene: by questioning the notion of labeling, classification and translation of the shelves in public libraries all over the world. The artist records the ways in which bookshops categorise their wares, and influence notions of genre.

This display proposal also makes sense through its content. Amongst the artworks that will be taking place in the booth, there are the major artworks such as the *Trilogy: I GOT UP, I WENT, I MET* by **ON KAWARA** and the *Colby Sign* installation by **ALLEN RUPPERSBERG**.

These iconic figures of conceptual art echo and complement each other on the booth.

These works will be joined by other artworks such as the more discreet but equally masterfull *One Million Years* by **ON KAWARA**, two small and compact volumes containing two times one million years. Or *Something in a Box* by **ROBERT BARRY**, a small box in walnut enclosing 62 statements by the artist, as well as *The Novel That Writes Itself*, the autobiographical novel-artwork by **ALLEN RUPPERSBERG** that gives a look at the most essential facet of the œuvre the artist created during almost forty years. East Coast versus West Coast...

Out of sight, the library becomes a space for private collection, creating a relationship of intimacy with the reader, illustrated by artworks such as *Mes dessins secrets* by **ANNETTE MESSAGER**: a bulk folder consisting of 76 erotic drawings, drawn freehand by the artist on various papers from notebooks and booklets or by the original and new work, *Journal* by **MATHIEU MERCIER**, recently published in 2015 by mfc-michèle-didier and containing a series of nude photographs, all coming from the artist's private collection.

Finally, the work *Ordeal of Picasso's Heirs* by **MUNTADAS** adds to this rich collection. The work, made entirely of the illustration of a newspaper article with a provocative title: *Ordeal of Picasso's Heirs*, focuses on the correlation between image copyright and the author's copyright in producing a work entirely based on reproduction (copies).

# ROBERT BARRY

## *SOMETHING IN A BOX*

62 statements on index cards

Each index card, 10,2 x 15,2 cm

Box made of walnut wood, 17,4 x 12,4 x 4,9 cm

Limited edition of 24 numbered and signed copies and 6 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2014 by mfc-michèle didier

©2014 Robert Barry and mfc-michèle didier



# ON KAWARA

*One Million Years*

2 volumes

2012 pages each

14,4 x 10,5 cm each

Slipcase, 11,5 x 9,2 x 16,2 cm

Limited edition of 60 numbered and signed copies, 500 numbered copies and 10 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 1999 by Editions Micheline Szwajcer & Michèle Didier

©1999 On Kawara and Editions Micheline Szwajcer & Michèle Didier



# ON KAWARA

## *Trilogy*

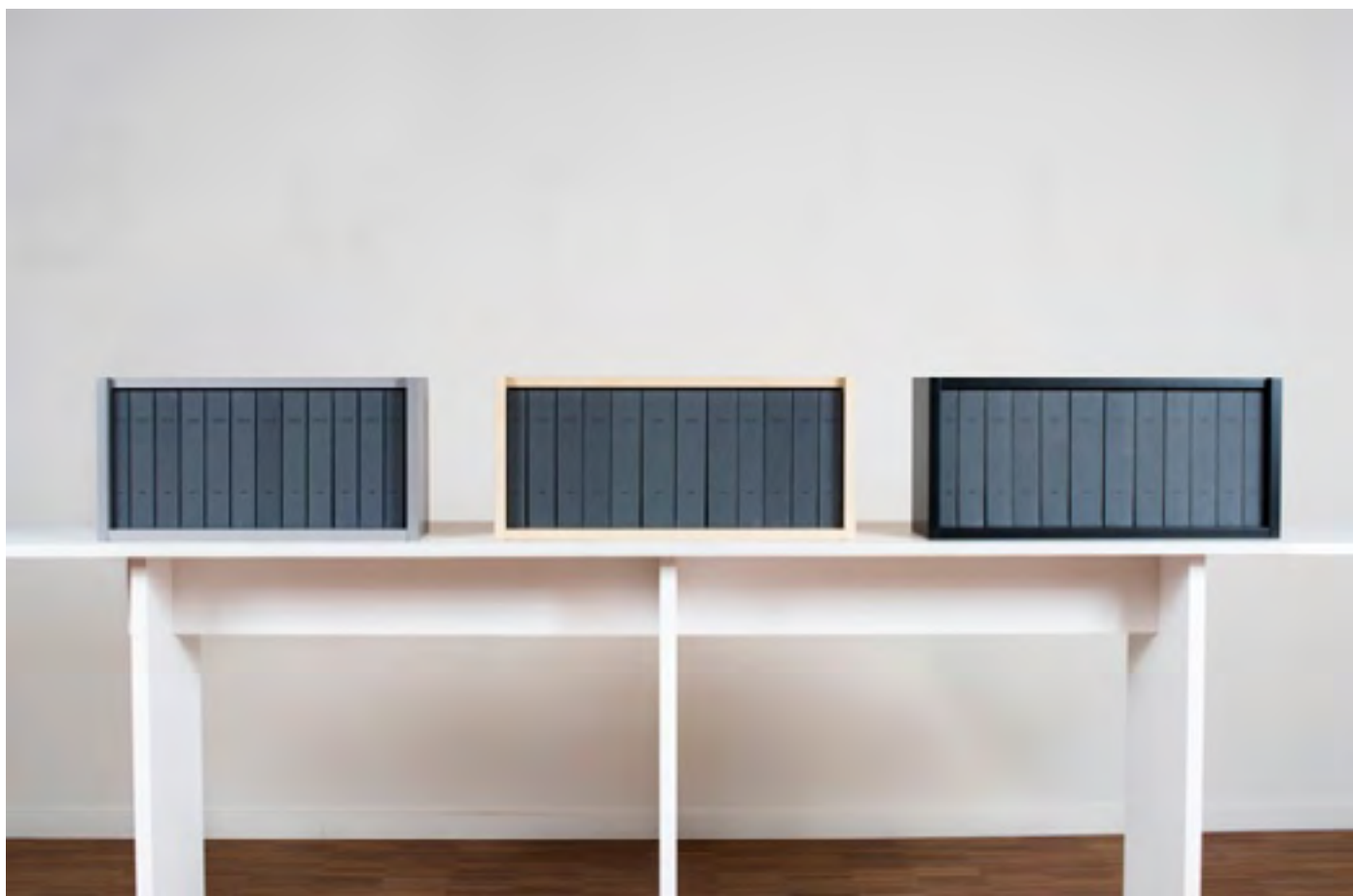
On Kawara's trilogy consists of *I GOT UP*, *I WENT* and *I MET*

36 (3 x 12) volumes

21 x 14,8 cm each

Total 13 690 pages

The three parts of the *Trilogy* are signed and numbered by the artist



# ON KAWARA

*I GOT UP*

12 volumes

21 x 14,8 cm each

Total 4160 pages

Limited edition of 90 numbered and signed copies and 10 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2008 by mfc-michèle didier

©2008 On Kawara and mfc-michèle didier



# ON KAWARA

*I WENT*

12 volumes

21 x 14,8 cm each

Total 4740 pages

Limited edition of 90 numbered and signed copies and 10 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2007 by mfc-michèle didier

©2007 On Kawara and mfc-michèle didier



# ON KAWARA

*I MET*

12 volumes

21 x 14,8 cm each

Total 4790 pages

Limited edition of 90 numbered and signed copies and 10 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2004 by Editions Micheline Szwajcer & Michèle Didier

©2004 On Kawara and Editions Micheline Szwajcer & Michèle Didier





# MATHIEU MERCIER

*Journal*

Newspaper

28 pages

50 x 35 cm

Limited edition of 130 copies and 20 artist's proofs

All copies are stamped, numbered and signed by the artist

Produced and published in 2015 by mfc-michèle didier

©2015 Mathieu Mercier and mfc-michèle didier



# ANNETTE MESSAGER

*Mes dessins secrets*

76 drawings

Size of the drawings: variable

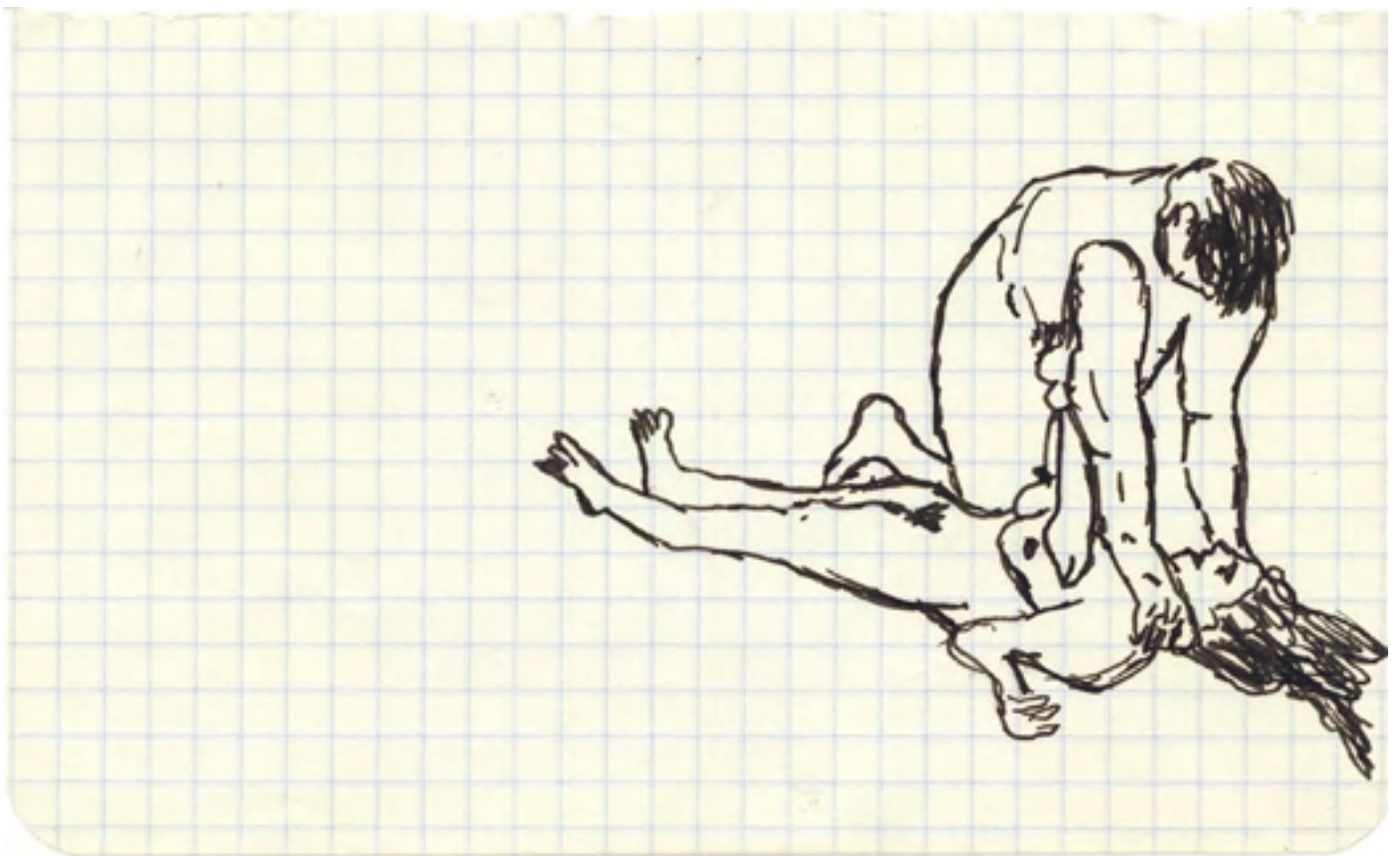
Size of the album: 32 x 24 cm

Limited edition of 24 numbered and signed copies and 6 artist's proofs

1972 - 2011

Produced and published in 2011 by mfc-michèle didier

©2011 Annette Messager and mfc-michèle didier



# MUNTADAS

*On Translation: The Bookstore*

32 prints

33 x 30 cm each

Cibachrome

Limited edition of 9 copies and 3 artist's proofs

Certificate numbered and signed by the artist

Produced and published in 2001



# MUNTADAS

*Ordeal of Picasso's Heirs.*

*The New York Times Magazine. April 20, 1980*

Variable dimensions

DVD in handmade box bound in black Frankonia and black velvet.

Silkscreen print and magnet closure, box: 26.5 x 18.5 x 5 cm

Photographic image manipulated by the artist and burned to DVD with a resolution of 575 MB, allowing it to be printed and mounted onto the wall up to a maximum size of 400 x 366 cm

Limited edition of 9 copies and 1 artist's proof

Box numbered and signed by the artist and coming with a certificate, numbered and signed by the artist

Produced and published in 2012



# ALLEN RUPPERSBERG

## *Colby Sign*

Installation consisting of a sign + 16 different posters

Sign: 55 x 90 cm

Each poster: 56 x 35.4 cm

Limited edition of 5 numbered and signed copies, each different

Each copy is unique.

Produced and published in 2014 by mfc-michèle didier

©2014 Allen Ruppertsberg and mfc-michèle didier



# ALLEN RUPPERSBERG

*The Novel That Writes Itself*

Binder

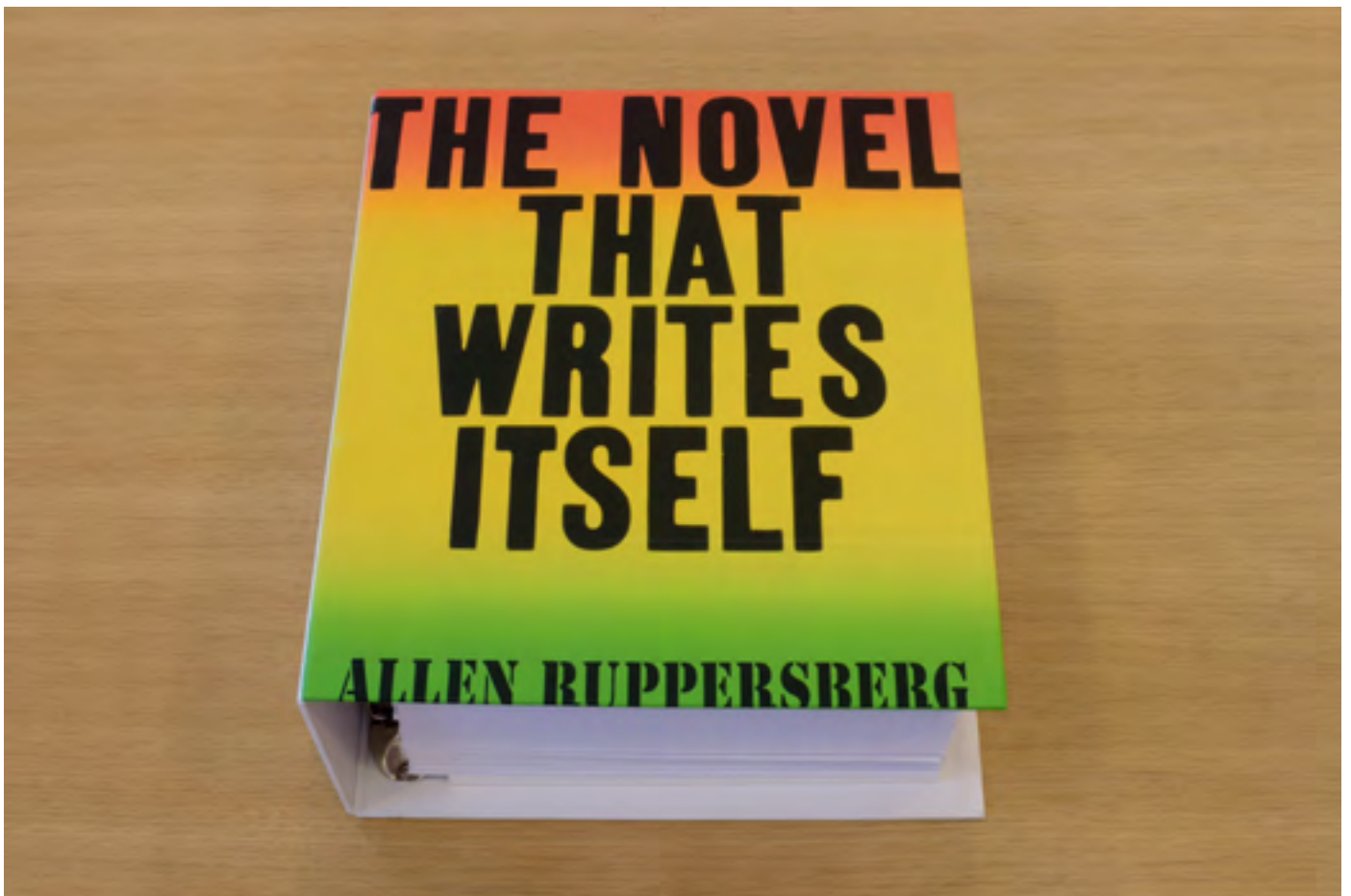
468 printed pages

30.2 x 24.8 cm

Limited edition of 24 numbered and signed copies and 6 artist's proofs

Produced and published in 2014 by mfc-michèle didier

©2014 Allen Ruppertsberg and mfc-michèle didier



# DETAILS ABOUT THE WORKS

## ROBERT BARRY

Robert Barry is one of the four artists who are considered by art history as the founders of conceptual art: Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner. Critic Gabriel Guerci even uses the acronym BHKW to name the four artists together, the same as with the Paris-based art group BMPT. More than the singularity of their works, it's perhaps the way they display them that distinguishes them from other artists of their time, for example through the catalog-exhibitions held by Seth Siegelaub such as the January Show in 1969: the dematerialisation of the exhibition, and thus of art, is one of these artists' main concerns.

Robert Barry's ambition to discard the object of art in order to concentrate on the idea is particularly strong. His interest for questions of perception bring him to the renouncement of visuality. He adopts a radical position, developing invisible works, in series such as *Inert Gas* in 1969, or conceiving mental works, which are based on thoughts, such as the series of *Psychic: All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking: 1:36 pm; June 15, 1969*.

Hence, Robert Barry exclusively uses language to render his psychic works public. — All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking — This is one of the most famous Statements made by Robert Barry on June 15, 1969 at 1:36 pm. This work only exists thanks to its formulation, its time frame is even recorded in the formulation itself to testify to its existence; later, the statement would be displayed on the gallery walls and materialized with vinyl letters. The exhibition *Live in your Head: When Attitudes Become Forms*, quickly turned out to be decisive, revealing the main questioning of contemporary art.

**SOMETHING IN A BOX** gives the opportunity to replay on another scale — 10,2 x 15,2 cm — the measurements of the card — here 62 — that were distributed about forty years ago. We are confronted with a box made of walnut wood, containing 62 index cards. Each card of *SOMETHING IN A BOX* proposes a different statement by Robert Barry — 62 Statements. The first one introduces the 61 following: SOMETHING THAT ... and then 61 statements that are supposed to define SOMETHING, the essence of which remains irrevocably unknown. Reading this new text by Robert Barry won't change that.

## ON KAWARA

The first volume of ***One Million Years, Past – For all those who have lived and died***, starts in 998031 BC and ends in 1969 AD, namely One Million Years later. At this date starts the *One Million Years* in the oeuvre of On Kawara, transcribed here for this edition on 2000 pages. The second volume, *Future – For the last one*, starts in 1993 AD and ends *One Million Years* later, in 1001992. This period is equally transcribed for the edition on 2000 pages. The text of each page is laid out in 10 columns, rigorously aligned and subdivided in 5 blocks of 100 years. Each block contains 10 lines and each line contains a decennium. The two volumes of the book correspond, their internal organization is identical.

### **Trilogy**

***I GOT UP*** - Between May 10, 1968 and September 17, 1979, On Kawara sent a postcard every day stating where he was. On the back of each card he stamped the words "I GOT UP AT", followed by the time at which he stood up that day. The date, the name and the address of both the recipient and the artist are also stamped on the card. *I GOT UP* brings together

this corpus in twelve volumes and the information within intersects with the facts reported in *I MET* and *I WENT*, the two other parts of the trilogy.

***I WENT*** - Between June 1st, 1968 and September 17, 1979, On Kawara used a red line to trace each of his daily trips on a map. Each day of this twelve-year period is represented in the twelve volumes of *I WENT*. The date of every trip is stamped at the bottom of each map. This publication enables to view the work as a whole, making one more sensitive to its temporal dimension.

***I MET*** - Every day during twelve years, from May 10, 1968 to September 17, 1979, the artist wrote down the names of the people with whom he conversed in chronological order. This work was published as a twelve-volume edition. On each page, the list of names appears together with the day's stamp in the footnote. Geographical location changes are signaled by grey page dividers with the city's name. Raising fundamental questions regarding name, encounter, time or space, *I MET* creates a poetry of the moment by provoking the feeling that each day is like an empty page before it is transcribed in book-matter.

## **MATHIEU MERCIER**

Mathieu Mercier's work seems to be created meticulously, according to a logic that's implacable and at the same time elusive. The artist develops since 1993 a multifaceted and moving practice of art, in the margin of the categories we would like to place it, as if it would help to better grasp it. At first glance, his sculptures and installations seem to question the place of the everyday object in art, of which all utility purpose has been erased carefully. Indeed, one of his main questionings is the irresolute passage of the utility object that is reconsidered and turned away from reality in an inexorable effort to locate it at the margins of abstraction.

In this framework, several references are at the basis of his work; from the avant-gardes who tried to mix noble art and utilitarian dimension, to Duchamp and later to contemporary design. However, the main question is perhaps not only the perception of a possibly impossible balance, but also the comprehension of the demonstration it originated from. (Translation of an excerpt of *Mathieu Mercier*, by Marie Chênél, in Cat. *No Man's Land*, 2010)

The Work ***Journal***, a limited edition newspaper, containing a series of nude photographs, all coming from Mathieu Mercier private collection. Where do these images come from? From a lost paradise? Mathieu Mercier tries to provide an answer. «These images are fascinating as they don't reveal any stylistic indication - the models don't have any cloths nor accessory and the scene always shows an exterior, rural decor. Nonetheless, we can guess the era thanks to the women's hairstyle, the way they pose and the quality of the picture. Even if they give the impression of a lost paradise, they clearly seem dated...»

## **ANNETTE MESSENGER**

Artist-collector and handywoman, Annette Messenger has made nearly sixty "collection albums" between 1972 and 1974. Inspired by words, writings and images, the artist has created her albums from an accumulation of texts, photographs, notes and miscellaneous items, cautiously collected and sorted. Sometimes carefully glued in notebooks, sometimes gathered in bulk folders, each one of Annette Messenger's albums include a handwritten title by the artist.

The albums are organized according to various themes, such as love life, encounters or domestic life and resemble



sometimes a diary, a photo album or a recipe book. *Les hommes que j'aime*, *Ma vie illustrée* or *Mon livre de cuisine* are a few examples. Annette Messager assembles common, everyday items to create a work that is subtly both poetic and feminist.

Although the use of the personal pronoun suggests that the albums are autobiographical, they are works of fiction. They reveal the ironic fantasy life of a young woman embodying the archetype of the 60's housewife. This woman is not Annette Messager.

***Mes dessins secrets*** is an album, where the content is gathered in bulk. Consisting of 76 erotic drawings, drawn freehand by the artist on various papers from notebooks and booklets. These drawings are torn or detached from their original support and are collected in this bulk folder.

## MUNTADAS

Antoni Muntadas (born in 1942 in Barcelona, Spain), also called Antonio Muntadas, or simply Muntadas, is a multidisciplinary installation and media artist. Since 1971, Muntadas has lived and worked in New York. Muntadas was a Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT from 1977 to 1984, and is currently Professor of the Practice at the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology. His work has been exhibited widely, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Gwangju Biennale, the Venice Biennale, Documenta 6 and Documenta X.

Through his work Muntadas addresses social, political and communications issues such as the relationship between public and private space. His works also often investigate channels of information and the ways they may be used to censor or promulgate ideas.

In 1995, he was awarded an Ars Electronica Honorary Mention for his well-known work «The File Room». It is an early and ongoing Internet art project, started in 1994, consisting of an open database of cases of censorship. Another long-term work, «On Translation» deals with language and the notion of translation, interpretation and transcription. The project was realized in various formats over the years, including several different exhibitions and a website hosted by the seminal Internet art gallery äda'web.

***The Bookstore*** is part of Muntadas' most important series ***On Translation***, and questions the labeling of shelves in public libraries all over the world.

***Ordeal of Picasso's heirs*** is another of Muntadas' works. It is made entirely of the illustration of a newspaper article with a provocative title : Ordeal of Picasso's heirs. This picture was published in The New York Times Magazine on April 20, 1980. Here, Muntadas is intrigued by the correlation between image copyright and the author's copyright in producing a work entirely based on reproduction (copies). Indeed, the photograph sold by the artist comes with a certificate of authenticity. Muntadas chose not to diffuse them in the form of a developed photograph but as a digital file engraved on a DVD. Its reproduction is then infinite and can be blown up to a considerable extent, thus making it possible to produce a four-meter large wallpaper with the image. Muntadas goes on to mention the following: « the author made his best efforts to study the legal rights of this work. If you believe that any part of the content of this work is a violation of your copyright, the author is willing to respect all rights issues and will reply fully when notified. The author reserves the right to verify your identity and to obtain further information to shed further light on the basis of the claim. »

## ALLEN RUPPERSBERG

It all begins with the end of a story, the one about the Colby Poster Printing Company that shut down in December 2012, taking with itself an emblematic graphic identity into history. A Colby poster can be easily distinguished from others and bear the stamp «from L.A.». Multicolored posters with unexpected gradients of flashy, typically Californian colors — the yellow of the sun or the beach, the green of the lush vegetation in this “West Coast” Eden, the blue of the ocean, the red or the pink of all the other wonders of this heavenly place on earth — the Colby posters, covered with outrageously bold characters, do not respect any typographical rules. These rules are mistreated, possibly by ignorance, probably on purpose; in either case it is a certain rule of the West not to follow the rules of the East.

«Colby Posters were the ultimate graphic design “ready-mades” and I think Marcel Duchamp would agree.»\* says Julia Luke of the Hammer Museum.

Individuals or professionals of Los Angeles entrusted the production of their communication media to the Colby printing house: announcements for school fairs, concert, political meetings, posters for films, performances or all other services. The posters were then put up on the wooden utility poles that characterized the city, as true marks of identity in the cityscape of Los Angeles. Many other artists and celebrities, such as Elvis Presly, Martin Luther King, Ed Ruscha or Eve Fowler also turned to this particular aesthetic. Allen Ruppertsberg was one of their most faithful and regular customers.

When the Colby Printing Company closed its doors, Allen Ruppertsberg recovered the printer’s original sign, that was installed above the entrance of the factory. Based upon this yellow wooden sign, the artist decided to make an edition, entitled **Colby Sign**. The work consists of a small size reproduction of the Colby sign, accompanied with 16 Colby posters on which the artist laminated photos of the second part of the sign, the letters P O S T E R P R I N T I N G CO. Each copy of the edition is unique, as in each series the Colby posters are different.

***The Novel That Writes Itself*** is a finished whole of a novel in progress, initiated in 1978 by the artist. This work includes, gathered in a binder of more than 10 cm thick, the text *The Torn-Apart Book* by Jan Tumlir, in introduction, and a series of 460 single-sided perforated sheets. Page after page, we discover the posters produced by the artist at the Colby Poster Printing Company up until its closing down in 2013, the posters Colby had produced that the artist had collected, and several photographs of past installations of *The Novel That Writes Itself* which come to punctuate the narration.

This binder, a heavy object, will give each person the chance to feel the magnitude of the novel-artwork *The Novel That Writes Itself*. The work is meant to be Allen Ruppertsberg’s autobiography, as fictionalized as it may be, and must therefore embrace the essence of the artist’s work during the past 40 years.

**FOR ANY INFORMATION  
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**We are fantastic**

**Antoni Muntadas, *We are fantastic*, 2005**