

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

604 SECOND AVE
SEATTLE, WA 98104
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PRESS RELEASE



Andrew Witkin
“AND AND OR”

July 6 – August 18, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday,
July 6th, 6 – 8 pm

Left: Andrew Witkin
Crowd 17, 2008-2016
woven and dyed cotton on pine stretcher
16 1/4 x 76

Gallery hours:
Wednesday - Saturday 11:00am - 5:00pm
Images are available upon request

‘Res’ is a nominative singular Latin noun for a substantive or concrete thing – as opposed to ‘spes’, which means something unreal or ethereal. For Andrew Witkin, the relationship between ‘res’ and ‘spes’ is more of a gradient than a line, thus no individual work or singularly authored work truly exists.

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present “AND AND OR”, a new installation of works by Andrew Witkin. This will be Boston-based Witkin’s third solo exhibition with the gallery. Witkin’s exhibition practice seeks to strike a balance between three intertwined aspects of creative production. First are works that are made, whether in groups or singularly, that exist with no forethought purpose. Second are juxtapositions of these groups, whether in part or whole, so as to better inform the individual works and to create dynamic dialogues (and thus accepting the idea that no one idea, object or answer is absolute). Thirdly are exhibitions, as wholes, that not only use the two aforementioned aspects but engage particular situations, spaces and times and thus call for not only particular arrangements, but additions and subtractions previously neither considered, desired or needed.

The current exhibition at James Harris Gallery continues this focus and yet pushes this balance into the most awkward place Witkin’s installations have been, so far. Consisting of elements from five bodies of works, “AND AND OR” seeks to create a non-hierarchical conversation about accessibility (and the lack thereof), comprehension, control, exploration, frustration, history, information, materiality, reception, society and the various trajectories between these and other topics.

The five bodies of work can be described as the following:

1) Witkin has collected (beginning in 2007) newspaper clippings with printing errors (e.g. an ink bleed, a mis-registration, missing information, etc). He has stacked them (with various organizational strategies), shrink-wrapped them and then framed them. These new arrangements present alternative experiences to the editorial decisions that normally dictate how one consumes information in a newspaper. In the current installation, they are installed along the south wall of the gallery and hung with the tops of the frames all at the same height which, with the variation in sizes of the frames, provides an irregular bottom ‘line’, creating a formal and contrasting relationship from within each framed element to the overall grouping, thus further exploring inner and outer (micro and macro) associations within the work(s).

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2) Above this line of framed works, Witkin installed a line of grey vinyl text. Sourced from the 1964 Don Covay song, “Mercy, Mercy”, the lyrics’ pronouns and the word “mercy” are displayed sequentially (as they appear in the song). With verbs and specifics removed, the “mercy” mentioned is taken out of context, and freed from its initial meaning that the Rolling Stones gave it in their song of love and love lost. Open for interpretation, Witkin encourages new ways of understanding these lyrics, with the endless associations spurred by the word “mercy” in this context.

3) Adjacent to these works is a small box cantilevered off the wall. White, rectangular and seemingly open in the front, it contains six books, all the same height (thus making them challenging to remove from the box). The books are versions of an ongoing project of continual addition, editing, reformulation and removal of short texts within the same format and same sized book (although the number of pages vary from 30 to 700 between volumes). Along with this process, questions of function, usability and the inherent wear and tear of paperback books are engaged formally and conceptually within the current presentation.

On the north wall of the gallery, two further bodies of work intermingle.

4) Three works consist of large irregular fields of yellow and each display a variant of the lyrics to “I Can’t Get No (Satisfaction),” (as transcribed by a different source). To make the works, Witkin only kept the excerpts of the song that were about ‘trying’ and typed them using a 1960’s typewriter (from the same era as the song’s writing) onto vintage yellow paper (also from the same era). Those typewritten ‘vintage’ pieces were then digitized, scanned and printed as light jet photos. The results were mounted and framed to become hybrid objects that are neither text nor photo, digital nor handmade, new nor historic. Their convoluted processes of creation engage the subject matter within the text presented.

5) Intermixed with these yellow works are four woven and stretched panels, each depicting a crowd of some sort. Witkin has converted images of crowds, taken from newspapers, into woven cotton objects using a computer-driven loom. The weavings are stretched over stretcher bars and so they serve as surrogates for paintings, yet have images imbedded in them (thus serving as pictures) and yet, up close, they never lose their identity as interwoven cotton woven together. Like the song lyrics, these images no longer represent the original event or intention of their creation, but become their own objects to experience in the current moment, yet always hint back to the previous incarnations of the imagery and materials used.

Through these works and the dialogue between them, Witkin presents new ways of looking at imagery, objects, history and the passage of time. Without a static interpretation of his own work, Witkin instead invites the viewer to bring their own inquisitiveness to these pieces. Gray areas are celebrated through the multivalent sourced imagery he uses in his work where nothing is permanent.

Witkin’s education occurred, academically, primarily at Wesleyan University (undergrad) and Tufts University (grad). Exhibition experiences have happened at museums such as Currier Museum of Art, DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as well as at galleries such as Allston Skirt Gallery in Boston, Theodore:Art in New York and James Harris Gallery in Seattle. Works are in the collections of the DeCordova, ICA, Boston, MFA, Boston and MFA, Houston. He has executed site-responsive works in locations as diverse as Big Bend National Park, Texas, Damascus, Syria, Naples, Italy, and a long-term project is in the works in northern New Hampshire. This summer, works of his are on view in groups shows at the Flag Foundation in New York and at Concord Art in Massachusetts. A large solo exhibition of his works at the University of New Hampshire’s Museum of Art will open in January, 2018. In addition, he is partner and director of Barbara

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Krakow Gallery in Boston and has served as the editor of the Sol LeWitt Catalogue Raisonné of Prints and is the editor of the forthcoming Mel Bochner Catalogue Raisonné of Prints.

As per his request, the project is attributed to Agnes Chaffee, Alasdair Duncan, Alasdair Roberts, Alfred North Whitehead, Alicia Hall Moran, Alighiero e Boetti, Alissa Farber, Alvin Lucier, Amy Witkin, Ana Tiscornia, Andrew Loog Oldham, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Anthony Allen, Arthur Miller, Athena Kirk, Barbara Krakow, Becca Zaremba, Ben Rothenberg, Benjamin Chaffee, Bob White, Booker T. Jones, Boris Groys, Brian Zink, Carlo Schmid, Cary Leibowitz, Charmaine Wheatley, Daiki Suzuki, Daniel Scholnick, David Marks, Dick Albright, Don Covay, Elaine Sturtevant, Ellen Berkman, Elena Filipovic, Elsa Moisey, Emily Alexander, Emily Isenberg, Enzo Mari, Erna Rosenberg, Evan Ziemann, Franz Xavier Messerschmidt, Gene Miller, George Kubler, Hamish Fulton, Hans Peter Feldmann, Henri Chopin, Howard Gardner, Howard Moody, Ira Wool, Isaac Hayes, James Harris, James Michael Curley, Jack Nietzsche, Janet Passehl, Jeffrey Kipnis, Jen Mergel, Jenny Watkins, Jeremy Ziemann, Jess Rosner, Jill Slossburg-Ackerman, Jim Ackerman, Jim Harris, Jimi Hendrix, Joe Scanlan, John Dewey, John Kramer, John Paoletti, John Stuart Gordon, Jon Pucker, Jordan Rosenblum, José Luis Blondet, Judith Butler, Judy Anderson, Julie Garfield Reich, Kaatje Cusse, Kat Parker-Monteleone, Kate Shepherd, Kay Rosen, Keith Richards, Keith Watts, Kenneth Goldsmith, Kimon Kirk, La Monte Young, Lara Cocken, Leah Witkin, Lee Mingwei, Lila Kanner, Liliana Porter, Marcel Duchamp, Marsha Ginsberg, Martha Rosler, Marvin Hagler, Mary O'Grady, Maureen Feeney, Micah Lexier, Michael Asher, Michael Bernstein, Mick Jagger, Milton Kornfeld, Monya Rowe, Natalia Valeria Porter Bolland, Natasha Burger, Nate Douglass, Nick Zaremba, Nina Bozicnik, Nina Felshin, Nuit Banai, Otis Redding, Otomo Yoshihide, Peter Downsbrough, Peter Kaye, Peter Littlefield, Peter Nesbett, Peter Pakesch, Pieranna Cavalchini, Puffin D'Oench, Rebecca Solnit, Rei Kawakubo, Rob Alexander, Robert Huot, Roger Conover, Roger Witkin, Roy McMakin, Ryan Cross, Samantha Cataldo, Sara Baker, Shellburne Thurber, Shelly Bancroft, Simon Lince, Skyela Heitz, Stephanie Theodore, Stephen Prina, Steve Reich, Steve Romansky, Steven Leiber, Steven Skov Holt, Sue Pucker, Su-Mei Tse, Suara Welitoff, Tatyana Gubash, Terry Albright, Tim Albright, Topher Cox, Toshi Ichiyangi, Veronica Roberts, Vincent Katz, Vivien Bittencourt, Wayne Jackson, Will Newman, Will Oldham, William Bell, Wislawa Szymborska, Witold Rybczynski, Yoshi Shimoyama, Yves Klein and Ziv Bernstein, among others, all with Andrew Witkin.