

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thomas Barrow

Works: 1974 - 2010

January 12 - February 9, 2013

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 12, 3 - 5pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a historic exhibition of work by Thomas Barrow. Since the 1960's, Barrow has pioneered new photographic methods and challenged the limited physicality of photography by pushing the medium into unprecedented forms.

For his series Cancellations (1974-1981), Barrow responded to the disparate photographic trends of the mid-70's: the survey-like, documentary approach to the American landscape as practiced by New Topographics photographers, and the desire to utilize photography in a more manipulative, experimental fashion. To that end, he photographed banal urban spaces and open terrain throughout the Southwest, and then aggressively tore through the emulsion on the negatives with an ice pick, marking them with an X.

Barrow's restless experimentation with photographic materiality led him to a series of Spray-Painted Photograms beginning in 1978 and Caulked Reconstructions in 1979. Comprised of fragmented photographs, automotive spray paint, and SX-70 Polaroids, the photograms investigate concepts of indexicality, cognition, and language. They transcend the photographic information at hand, becoming instead catalogues of cultural detritus. Concurrently, Barrow returned to his series Cancellations, further corrupting the imagery by tearing it up and then reconstructing it with silicone caulk. These works are visceral objects to experience. As such, they call attention to the specific material properties of the photograph, and initiate a dialogue with other media.

In the years that followed, Barrow's interest in cultural cataloguing and transgressing the limitations of the photographic print developed simultaneously, giving rise to an array of sculptural assemblages. In these, Barrow juxtaposes Polaroids of appropriated film and television imagery with non-art objects such as plastic toys, ceramics, and books; the caulk and spray paint remain as formal motifs. Barrow's deliberate combinations of materials and signifiers serve as clues for a multitude of narratives and meanings, that ask the viewer look beyond the obvious. For a recent series, Detritus, Barrow pares down the assemblages to a simple, but meticulous gesture, recontextualizing individual images and objects into plastic bags.

In his words, Thomas Barrow wants to "move from the transparent, window-on-the-world form that has been photography's primary reason for being since its invention, to making it a physical object, an object to be looked at for its own presence and not for a surrogate experience". A cerebral innovator and iconoclast, Barrow is a predecessor to numerous contemporary artists currently pushing photography beyond its limits.

Thomas Barrow lives and works in Albuquerque, NM. His work is included in numerous public collections such as The Art Institute of Chicago, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Fogg Museum, National Gallery of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and Princeton Art Museum. This will be his first solo exhibition in New York since 1996.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 615 West 27th Street, between 11th and 12th Avenues. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com