

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Silhouettes: Prints and Multiples, on view from February 2 through March 17, presents the work of ten artists who have employed the silhouette form as the basis of their imagery. Included in the exhibition are works by Ulay and Marina Abramovic, Laurie Anderson, Teresa Bramlette, Richard Diebenkorn, Lois Lane, Robert Moskowitz, Ed Ruscha, Donald Sultan, and David True. The exhibition offers a range of subject matter: the evocative, gestural figures of Ulay and Marina Abramovic, the personal symbols of Richard Diebenkorn, Ed Ruscha's mundane but mysteriously rendered images, Donald Sultan's double entendres.

Silhouettes do not duplicate a form as it exists in nature but retain only one of the most basic identifying marks of familiar things: their outline. The word "silhouette" is derived from the name Etienne de Silhouette (1706-69), a Minister of Finance under Louis XV of France, whose hobby it was to cut profiles from black paper. The origins of the form, however, relate to cave paintings and the importance to early people of shadow as spirit. Different cultures through the ages have held a strong belief in the powers, good or evil, attached to shadows. Related to this religious aspect is the shadow's role as a proof of physical existence. Should a shadow mysteriously appear without an associated figure or should a figure not cast a shadow, logical explanations are displaced by supernatural musings. Shadows are bound to notions of the soul.

The work included in Silhouettes: Prints and Multiples does not necessarily represent religious or superstitious beliefs but it does present the silhouette's potential as being a symbol or code, and ultimately equates silhouettes to ideas. The generic nature of silhouettes and their independence from an associative or narrative background allows viewers to respond on the basis of the meanings that they attach to the image alone. This response may be shaped by personal psychology or by our cultural system. David True's images and abstract forms strike a responsive chord in the human psyche. Fragmented profiles of humans and deer hover in the murky atmosphere of Woodland, 1985, where suggestions of the fantastic become alive. Teresa Bramlette's delicate photograms enhance the iconic quality of various ordinary objects, transforming an ostensibly imitative quality into an index or sign for multiple references. Most silhouettes are typically darkened conveying either a shadow image, which implies the presence of a nearby figure or object, or a physical impression, evidence of something once present and now absent. In either case, the meaning resides in one's memory or imagination, and the silhouette becomes a formal rendering of the thing as concept.

The University Gallery, located on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center, is open Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. The Gallery is also open during evening performances held at the Concert Hall.

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