

NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

John Evans

July 15 - August 13, 2021

Opening reception Thursday, July 15, 4-6 PM

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present its first exhibition with the Estate of John Evans.

John Evans (1932-2012) made daily collages for nearly forty years out of discarded materials found on the streets of New York. His disciplined, idiosyncratic practice recorded life in an earnest manner, capturing the minutiae of a changing neighborhood, art scene, and city through their endless fragments. On view in this exhibition are a selection of over sixty mixed media collages, the majority of which are rendered on 11 x 8 1/2 inch copy paper.

Arriving in the East Village in 1963 after attending the Art Institute of Chicago, Evans quickly turned his attention from abstract painting to collage, a tactic firmly rooted in earlier 20th-century traditions of art making. Inspired by Hannah Höch, Joseph Cornell, and Kurt Schwitters, Evans developed a highly site-specific practice that responded to materials found in his immediate environment. His involvement in the international mail art movement equally informed his style—correspondence with contemporaries like Ray Johnson, May Wilson, and Buster Cleveland unfold across the pages of his notebooks.

In a 2004 essay, art historian Robert M. Murdock observes how Evans's collages are in fact "page-sized paintings that extend the boundaries of the medium." Evans uniquely avoided the more common collage method of layering; instead, he isolated pasted elements on the page as discrete forms. The artist used ink to connect and build frames around the individual shapes, then completing the composition with watercolor washes.

The detritus Evans collected was limitless in its formal and psychic properties. Business cards, fortune cookie aphorisms, newspaper clippings, receipts, passport and family photographs, box labels, stickers, embroidered fabric, envelopes, and pencil shavings, among many other things, commune in the artist's diaristic work to tell infinitely associative stories about the history of the East Village and New York. Each collage, dutifully stamped with the day, month, and year of its making, marks a singular moment in time and the evolving vision of an artist living in and of the world.

John Evans (1932-2012) was born in Sioux Falls, SD, and lived and worked for most of his life in the East Village, New York. He has had solo exhibitions at The New York Historical Society, New York; the Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ; The Arts Club of Chicago, IL; Pavel Zoubok Fine Art, Cordier & Ekstrom, and Gracie Mansion Gallery, New York, among others. Evans was recently included in *Club 57: Film, Performance, and Art in the East Village, 1978-1983* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other group exhibitions include Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, OR; Pavel Zoubok Fine Art, P.P.O.W., and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY; and the XVI Bienal de Sao Paulo, BR.

His work is included in the collections of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and the Morgan Library & Museum, New York.