

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**CONTACT: Photi Giovanis, info@callicoonfinearts.com, 212-219-0326****Jason Simon*****Imprint***

May 23–July 13, 2018

Opening Reception: Wednesday, May 23, 6–8pm

Callicoon Fine Arts proudly presents *Imprint*, Jason Simon's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Simon's installation extends his work in media histories through found and collected materials, sculpture, photo-collage, and video.

Imprint juxtaposes the strange with the familiar and autobiographical, suggesting both reside in compromised and overlapping media memories. A series of "lobby cards," for example, normally a promotional item for movies, combines Simon's processed analog

video frame-grabs with documentation from the field of Creative Dramatics. Simon's mother, Josephine, trained in Creative Dramatics—her practicum doctoral dissertation from 1972 is the source of imagery, text, and imagined titles. Within the gallery, context emerges via contrasting mediums and methods, suggestive sightlines, and the idea of hand-me-down sensations.

As a genre of theater, Creative Dramatics positions itself within utopian pedagogy: through play and story, touch and movement, the body becomes an agent of empathy and democratized self-expression. Simon's video, *From Creative Dramatics to Owego*, narrated in part by Josephine, rehearses her methodology on-screen. Recorded visits to the Experimental Television Center in upstate New York in the early 2000s, interspersed with processed visuals, nods to Simon's background in electronic media. Both alternative video and Creative Dramatics exercised a language of liberation that remains contradictory, unresolved. On the gallery's website, a video Simon created in collaboration with his college students activates Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos' poetry of anarchism, masquerading as a news conference, where projections double as fact.



In the gallery, outdated and outlaw material history intersect. *The Gamecock*, a magazine devoted to cockfighting, is assembled into a large grid entitled *Flag*. In the shadow of the birds, arranged into a chorus or citizenry, an ideological tension sprouts from even a whisper of the damned sport, the periodicals only recently banned after a century of national circulation promoting the persistent cruelty. Proceeding from anthropologist Clifford Geertz's sense of *deep play*—the continual engagement with an impossibly high stakes scenario, ranking status over sustenance—and from Charles Willeford's pulp-fiction novel, *Cockfighter*, whose hard-boiled hero operates under a vow of silence, Simon draws attention to American valences.

Rather than define or dismiss, Simon recovers references for recycling and interpretation, perhaps with a dose of wishful thinking. His bricolage sculptures of mannequin, nail salon, and jewelry display hands, each adorned with leather and metal accessories usually reserved for gamecocks, disconnect from the 'sport'. These works, titled *Muffs and Gaffs*, are attached to metal shelves at the wrist, suggestive of a recreational purpose or couture. Cockfighting serves as an oscillating frame of reference, at once an anthropomorphic vocabulary of adornment, and allusion to sparring rhetoric. For *Imprint*, Simon approaches artifact-ambiguity, circulating on eBay among cockfighting connoisseurs or archives of Creative Dramatics, as a contradictory logic of the present.

Jason Simon (b. 1961) is an artist who lives and works in New York and teaches at The College of Staten Island, City University of New York. Solo exhibitions include *Request Lines are Open*, Callicoon Fine Arts, NY (2015); *In and Around the Ohio Pen*, Sismografo, Porto, Portugal (2015); and *Changeover*, Artexte, Montreal (2014). Recent group exhibitions have taken place at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao; mumok, Vienna; The Kitchen, New York; Dazibao, Montreal; Yale Union, Portland, Oregon; and *Ibid*, London. Simon's videos are distributed by The Video Data Bank and Icarus Films. His writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *May Journal*, *Parkett*, *Frieze*, *Springerlin*, and *Afterimage*. Simon and Moyra Davey's "Ten Years of the One Minute Film Festival" was hosted by MASS MoCA in 2013. Simon was a founding member of the cooperatively run gallery, Orchard (2005–08), and he established the Art & Tech filmmaking residency facility at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. This summer, his work will appear in *The Conditions of Being Art: Pat Hearn Gallery and American Fine Arts, Co (1983–2004)*, at the Hessel Museum, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Callicoon Fine Arts is located at 49 Delancey Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm. The nearest subway stops are the B and D trains at Grand Street and the F, J, M and Z trains at Delancey-Essex Street.