

Butch Hancock
Curated by Terry Allen

October 18 – December 1, 2007
(Opening reception: Thursday, October 18, 6:00 – 8:00pm)

“He’s made his life completely about the making of amazing things. Other than music, only a small group of friends and family really know about this other work....Photographs, film, video, outlandish architectural propositions, elaborate ballpoint drawings, handmade journals filled with writings, sketches and scrawls, etc... and always, the songs.”

— Terry Allen

Armed with the adage that rules are meant to be broken, Butch Hancock left architecture school at Texas Tech University to pursue many overlapping paths as musician, songwriter, troubadour, builder, planner, architect, artist, photographer, cinematographer, cartoonist and video producer. Throughout his extensive travels, he carried with him journals in which he recorded “the interesting ephemeral moments of life.”

Marking his first exhibition in New York, Hancock’s exhibition at CUE will present a diverse selection of 10 to 15 medium-sized, digitalized drawings installed alongside a vitrine containing the artist’s original travel journals and 10 to 15 black and white photographs, most of which were taken during a span of 40 years largely spent on the road as a touring musician.

Working with black Bic ball-point pen, Hancock’s elaborate drawings of fantastical, futuristic, curvilinear dwellings set in elaborate fertile fields reveal his inner journeys and meditations on the functioning of the universe. Organic shapes and cantilevered structures featured in his drawings reference the works of architect-visionsaries including Antonio Gaudí and Frank Lloyd Wright; while the liquid lyricism of his compositions evoke the Surrealist terrain of artists Salvador Dalí and Juan Miró.



Flight of Garuda (bic book #41), 2004.
Inkjet print from original ball-point pen on paper, 16 1/2" x 10 3/4"



Dawg at Leap...Lubbock, Texas, 1970
Inkjet print, 30" x 20 1/4"

His facility for building two-dimensional forms in black and white derives primarily from his experience working as an architectural photographer in his early 20’s. Developing techniques honed in the darkroom influenced his drawing practice by encouraging him to continue to explore different depths of tonality between deep black and bright white. In recent ink on paper works, such as *Flight of Garuda (bic book #41)*, 2004 (picture above), Hancock begins by filling in the sky with rich black and gradually works forward, allowing forms to “pop” and define the composition; then carefully balances the amount of pressure applied when guiding his pen over the tooth and texture of the paper in order to achieve an enormous range of tonality and detail.

Drafting techniques are also present in photographs such as *Dawg at Leap...Lubbock, Texas*, 1970, a picture taken shortly after Hancock began his first series of drawings. Here, the highlighting of contours draw attention to the hyper-extended arc of movement and, coupled with use of subtle tones to achieve greater depth, echoing similar techniques found in his imaginary architecture. Whether it’s capturing the explosive enormity of single kernel of pop corn, or the micro-instant of a dog suspended in flight, Hancock’s sculptural sense of form and deft use of tone throughout the photographs and drawings on view elevates an image beyond the ordinary into a moment, expression, or gesture which pulsates with pictorial clarity and compositional balance. He is able to bring to light the freedom of discovery by revealing the monumentality of suspended time.

For additional information, please contact Ryan White, Programs Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email ryan.white@cueartfoundation.org

Catalogue available.

Accompanying Public Program:

words+music: Terry Allen and Butch Hancock

Friday, October 19, 6:30pm

CUE Art Foundation, 511 West 25th Street, Admission FREE / RSVPs required.

Exhibiting artist Butch Hancock, songwriter and member of the legendary Texas band the Flatlanders, along with exhibition curator Terry Allen, an accomplished West Texan visual artist and songwriter, will perform their own original songs. Many of the songs will be performed in front of a backdrop of high-speed, time-lapsed highway movies shot by Hancock in the 70's at varying speeds ranging from 300 to 16,000 mph across West Texas.

ARTIST'S BIO:

Born on the flatlands in Lubbock, TX, in 1945, Hancock attended architecture school at Texas Tech University (1963-1971) in Lubbock. While pursuing a career in music, he has continued to make ball-point pen drawings of curved and curious architecture since 1969. A founding member of the legendary West Texas band the Flatlanders, he has also produced many recorded songs and albums through his own record companies (Rainlight since 1976, and Two Roads since 2006) – and has toured mostly as a solo act, carrying cameras on all his tours and traveling extensively around the world including Alaska, Mexico, Europe, Russia, Australia, Hong Kong and Kathmandu. Over the last 40 years, Hancock has honed his skills both as an artist and photographer and has exhibited mostly in Texas, in museums and galleries including the Texas State Capitol Rotunda (1978).

In 1969 and 1970, Hancock worked for Architectural Photographer, Jeremiah O. Bragstad, on the West Coast. From 1978-1980, he designed and remodeled a train station near Seguin, TX. In 1983, with George Howard, he co-founded Artist Seven Studio in Austin, TX and co-produced over 150 video tapings of Texas musicians. From 1990-96, he rented and remodeled a loft space in downtown Austin, and remodeled it into a store, gallery, tape-dupe operation, photo studio, darkroom, and performance space that presented a wide range of Texan artists, performers and exhibitions. Also in 1990, Mr. Hancock produced “No Two Alike Tape of the Month Club,” a compilation of live recordings of 140 of his original songs performed earlier that year at Austin’s famed Cactus Café. In 1997, the Hancock family moved to Terlingua, TX, and he has been in the process of building a solar-powered, Chihuahuan Desert residence ever since. From 2002 to mid-2004, Hancock toured nationally with the Flatlanders, which lead to two new Flatlander CD’s. Last year, Mr. Hancock wrote, recorded, produced and played on “War and Peace,” his most recent CD.

ABOUT CUE:

CUE Art Foundation, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit forum for contemporary art and cultural exchange between artists and the public. CUE gives artists, students, scholars and arts professionals resources at many stages of their careers and creative lives. Our programs include exhibitions, studio residencies, publications, professional development seminars, educational outreach, symposia, readings and performances. Since 2002, we have operated from our 4,500 square foot storefront venue in New York’s Chelsea Arts District.

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