

Robert Seydel
Curated by Peter Gizzi

March 15 – April 21, 2007
(Opening Thursday, March 15, 6-8pm)

“He is a strong believer in art-making as a process not just of representing but of uncovering a world that would otherwise remain hidden. The uncanny likenesses rendered in his various portraits show a love of metamorphic intensity and of mysteries on the verge of being revealed.”

—Peter Gizzi

The approximately 80 small-scale collages, drawings, and mixed media works on view by Robert Seydel offer a multitude of ways of experiencing visual art as poetry. Working in notebooks and on found paper materials, according to Gizzi, “so many of his tools are a writer’s: whiteout, pencil and pen, erasers, tape, type, and newsprint, which he uses to capture light and color, the movement between what is lasting and fleeting, conducting acts of salvage rather than consumption.” By treating letters, numbers, and punctuation marks as aesthetic visuals, he blurs the lines between visual and textual art in work that vibrantly details how poetry can be a visible, tangible experience of the artist’s process.



Robert Seydel
Ruth Greisman, *Untitled [to Joseph C.]*,
from *The Book of Saul*, 2000-2007
Paper, ink and found photograph, 5 1/4" x 6 1/4"

Seydel’s works on view incorporate fictional strategies, hybrid visual forms, collage, drawing, photography, and extensive textual matter often laced with private meanings and references. Many of the pasted-in elements and typography featured are cut out of old books or found materials, and the style of collage mixed with hand-drawn elements adds the impression of pages held over from a kind of mid-century archive. Several works on view feature and follow the vast narrative of Seydel’s alter ego: Ruth Greisman, both eponymous and real aunt and artist of *The Book of Saul*, 2000-present.



Robert Seydel
Oils!, 2005
Collage on paper, 4" x 6 3/4"

Seydel’s ability to simultaneously work on and rotate between multiple series allows for flexibility within his creative process, and for experimentation with new content. Reflecting the interlocking nature of his practice, a composite installation on view along the main gallery wall will feature a selection of works compiled from the following series: *New Droon Works*, 2002-2004, a series of drawings in pencil and ink; *Siselnamés (Mixed Melodies)*, 2000, a series of collages and mixed media on paper from Greece and Turkey; *Series Homages*, 2002-present, a set of collages, oils, and mixed media on paper devoted to Ted Berrigan, Velimir Klebnikov, and numerous other art and literary luminary figures; *Flattened Paper Paste-Ups and A Fauna*, 2003-present, a series of collages and mixed media on paper representing a variety of anthropomorphic visions of imagined animals; and a number of miscellaneous pieces.

The adjacent gallery walls will feature a significant grouping from Seydel’s longest ongoing project, *The Book of Saul*, 2000-present, an epic series incorporating collage, writing, and other works, all ostensibly made by the artist’s aunt. *The Book* chronicles the lives of its two main protagonists, aunt and uncle, Ruth and Saul (or Sol) Greisman, and their relationships with Joseph Cornell and Marcel Duchamp. A fifth character, mostly invisible, is “Robt,” or Robert Cornell, Joseph’s homebound brother, a sometime stand-in for Seydel himself. In real life, Saul was a plumber, and Ruth, among other things, a Sunday painter, who attempted to teach Seydel oil painting on occasion.

(Cont.)

In *The Book*, they meet Cornell (and through him, Duchamp), both of whom Ruth proceeds to falls in love with. Selections of Ruth's artwork on view take the form of mailings to Joseph, such as *Untitled [to Joseph C.]*, 2000-2007, (pictured above right), numerous journal writings, along with various serial and other pieces composed of fragments and encompassing a rotation of styles to form a biography of Ruth's (and Seydel's) own making.

This exhibition is supported in part by Viking Foundation.

Exhibition-related Public Program:

Friday, March 16, 2007, 6:30 pm Admission Free / Reservations are required

Reading by **Peter Gizzi**, Poet and CUE curator of the Robert Seydel exhibition, from his recent book of poetry, *The Outernationale*, 2007.

Peter Gizzi is the author of four books of poetry, including *Some Values of Landscape and Weather* (2003), as well as the editor of *The House That Jack Built: The Collected Lectures of Jack Spicer* (1998). Gizzi's honors include the Lavan Younger Poet Award from the Academy of American Poets (1994) and a fellowship in poetry from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (2005).

Catalogue available.

ARTIST'S BIO:

Robert Seydel, born in New York, NY, lives in Amherst, MA, where he is Assistant Professor of Photography at Hampshire College. He received a BFA in English and Photography from New York University and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. He has taught on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, and the University of Connecticut at Storrs, and served for a number of years as Director of Exhibitions at the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University. Seydel received a regional fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts for his serial work, *A Short History of Portraiture*. A selection from his ongoing *Book of Saul* was published in 2005 in *1913: A Journal of Forms*, issue 2. Work from the series *Eckstein-Sousa* was exhibited in *Five Contemporary Visual Poets* at The Wright Exhibition Space (Seattle, WA, 2006). This exhibition at CUE Art Foundation marks his first solo exhibition in New York City.

ABOUT CUE:

CUE Art Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit arts organization, is dedicated to providing a comprehensive creative forum for contemporary art by supporting under-recognized artists via a multi-faceted mission spanning the realms of gallery exhibitions, public programming, professional development programs and arts-in-education.

The Foundation was established in June of 2002 with the aim of providing educational programs for young artists and aspiring art professionals in New York and from around the country. These programs draw on the unique community of artists, critics, and educators brought together by the Foundation's season of exhibitions, public lectures, workshops, and its studio residency program: all are designed to be of lasting practical benefit to aspiring and under-recognized artists. The entire CUE identity is characterized by artistic quality, independent judgment and the discovery of genuine talent, and provides long-term benefits both for creative individuals associated with CUE and the larger art marketplace. Located in New York's Chelsea gallery district, CUE's 4,500 square feet of gallery, studio and office space serves as the nexus for educational programs and exhibitions conducted by CUE.

CUE Art Foundation's operations and programs are made possible with the generous support of foundations, corporations, government agencies, individuals and its membership. Programming assistance is provided by: Accademia Charitable Foundation, Ltd., American Express Company, Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts, Inc., The Greenwall Foundation, Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc., Joan Mitchell Foundation, Viking Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and with public funds from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts.

For additional information, please contact Kara Smith, Programs Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email kara.smith@cueartfoundation.org. Gallery hours: Tues.-Sat., 10am-6pm.