

GEARY

William Corwin
Champollion
curated by David Goodman
July 21 – August 12, 2016

Opening Reception Thursday July 21, 6 – 8 PM

Geary Contemporary is excited to present *Champollion*, a solo exhibition of sculptures by New York-based artist William Corwin. *Champollion* is a collection of small and medium-sized cast sculptures, in lead, plaster and resin that offer up a glossary of found and constructed symbols: the title refers to Jean-Francois Champollion, decipherer of the hieroglyphic language; a pictographic/ideographic and phonetic form of communication that the sculptor sees as a model for the construction of his own objects as both images and texts. The accompanying catalog offers a selection of Corwin's interviews with archeologists Colin Renfrew, Jill Cook and Yonas Beyene on the origins of symbolism, drawing and form. The organization and installation of the gallery loosely imitates a celestial ship carrying Corwin's sculptures and the spirit of the father of Egyptology, Champollion, across the sky.

"Champollion, is a presentation in a Bark—a ship that would guide a pharaoh on their interstellar afterworld journey. Set up for this exhibition, Corwin's solar vessel is on a burial voyage for the Father of Egyptology. Jean-François Champollion (an original Hacker) who freed the hidden narrative held captive by poor translation. He deciphered hieroglyphics and opened history."

- David Goodman

Corwin's sculptures draw on the pre-modern history of assemblage in order to coagulate information in to a distinct body. As opposed to the digitization processes of today, wherein information and knowledge are conflated into the abstract "memory" of a device, Corwin's work is an amalgamation of cavities, creating a network of meaning through pocked symbols. Corwin defines objects by means of collection, not unlike the collection and aggregations of symbols we use in order to communicate with our thumbs via iPhone. In this way, *Champollion* is an exhibition of future artifacts from a renaissance of the hieroglyph.

Corwin has had an interview program on Clocktower Radio for the past seven years and spent this past winter in Ethiopia interviewing artists, musicians and archeologists. One of the main foci of this trip was to see and study the Ark culture of Ethiopia and to discuss and research the earliest hominin ancestors whose remains have been discovered in the northeast desert of the country. His sculptures are scaled so as to directly involve the viewer as a participant in the viewing experience, and previous projects, at the historic Clocktower Gallery; the Staten Island Ferry terminal; South Street Seaport; and Puccs Gallery in Budapest have allowed viewers to physically interact with the work.

The exhibitions *Cyborg* at Zurcher Gallery and *Devotion* at Catinca Tabacaru, curated by Will Corwin in the fall of 2015 were complementary projects meant to explore the means by which artists are depicting the human entity within the modern technological/ecological/ and sociological context, in the former, and the original use-value of contemporary artworks placed in a liturgical setting, in the latter. *Champollion* brings together the lead pieces by the artist from those exhibitions, and the series of eight multicolored cast plaster works from his collaboration with cartographer Neil Greenberg, *The Great Richmond*—an interactive game-based sculpture on view at the Staten Island Ferry terminal in 2014-15. In addition there are several new lead, wood/plaster and resin works.

William Corwin has been reviewed in ArtNews, Art Monthly, Sculpture Magazine, Art Critical, and The Brooklyn Rail and he has exhibited at The Red Gate Gallery in Beijing, The FRISE Kunstlerhaus in Hamburg, and the George and Jorgen Gallery in London. Corwin exhibited regularly at the LaMama Gallery in the late 90's and early 2000's and at Gallery Aferro, and Index art Space in Newark, the Flushing Town Hall (a Smithsonian Affiliate) and The Castle Gallery. He will curate *I Cyborg* at the Gazelli Art House in London in October 2016.

David Goodman is a New York-based artist represented by Geary Contemporary. He was a 2014 Whitney Biennial participant with Critical Practices Inc. Goodman's work has been featured in exhibitions nationally and internationally. He has curated exhibits at the Judd Foundation and Skowheghan School of Painting and Sculpture, is a founding member of Critical Practices Inc. (NYC), is a founding member of Critical Practices Inc., and has served as a Visiting Artist/Critic and Adjunct faculty at numerous institutions (RISD, Rowan University, Pratt, SVA).

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