

# VALLOIS

**GALERIE**  
Georges-Philippe  
& Nathalie  
Vallois

## PAUL KOS

### «Allegories and Metaphors (1968-2012)»

36, rue de Seine  
75006 Paris-fr  
T.+33(0)1 46 34 61 07  
F.+33(0)1 43 25 18 80  
www.galerie-vallois.com  
info@galerie-vallois.com

Boris Achour *FR*,  
Pilar Albarracín *SP*,  
Gilles Barbier *FR*,  
Julien Berthier *FR*,  
Julien Bismuth *FR*,  
Mike Bouchet *USA*,  
Alain Bublex *FR*,  
Massimo Furlan *CH*,  
Richard Jackson *USA*,  
Adam Janes *USA*,  
Jean-Yves Jouannais *FR*,  
Martin Kersels *USA*,  
Paul Kos *USA*,  
Paul McCarthy *USA*,  
Jeff Mills *USA*,  
Joachim Mogarra *FR*,  
Arnold Odermatt *CH*,  
Niki de Saint Phalle *FR*,  
Jean Tinguely *CH*,  
Keith Tyson *GB*,  
Jacques Villeglé *FR*,  
Olav Westphalen *D*,  
Winshluss *FR*,  
Virginie Yassef *FR*



23  
November  
2012  
—  
19  
January  
2013

#### OPENING

Thursday 22  
November 2012  
from 6 p.m.



Before the inauguration of his solo show at Galerie Georges-Philippe et Nathalie Vallois by Paul Kos (born 1942), this Californian artist has been known in France essentially through a few emblematic pieces seen in group shows, and because of his presence in collections such as the Fondation Kadist and the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Lorraine. In Europe he is perhaps best known for his influence on the Bay Area conceptual scene, as observed by those who travelled to San Francisco, and for his contribution to American conceptual art in general, as well as through the considerable critical literature that has grown up around his work since the beginning of his career in the late 1960s.

The catalogue of his major retrospective at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in 2003 makes clear the important role played by Kos in relation to other artists of his generation, to whom he was close (Vito Acconci, Bruce Nauman, Bas Jan Ader, Joseph Kosuth, Larry Bell, to name but a few), and to younger artists who now recognise him as one of the most influential teachers on the West Coast over the last three decades. Among them we find Julien Berthier, who took his classes, and who is taking over the Project Room in parallel to Kos' exhibition. Kos has a historical role, too, by virtue of his close involvement in the creation of MoCA Los Angeles by Tom Marioni as an independent exhibition space, and also in that of the legendary magazine *Avalanches*.

This is the first time viewers in France will be able to properly experience Kos' work. The show features a truly representative selection of his art from 1968 to 2012.

It will articulate both the contextual forces in play (at the centre of which, of course, is the artist) and the paradoxes on which the work is founded. By way of an introduction, we might somewhat arbitrarily begin with the antitheses East/West, Ying/Yang, Give/Receive, Form/Content, Seriousness/Humour, Ephemeral/Permanent, Ordinary/Extraordinary. The important thing to understand is that this notion of paradox is used for its dynamic properties. It is by juggling with such antitheses that the artist can hope to find equilibrium.

In Kos, this may take the form of the serious or joking defiance of universal laws, whether physical (for example, the *Equilibre* series very openly subverts gravity), chemical (*Kinetic Ice Block*) acoustic (*The Sound of Ice Melting*), or all those things combined. Manifested in the form of performance, installation and video, Kos' works are not about making objects. Their common theme, broadly, could be the concerns of sculpture. Each piece poetically and humorously attacks and dwells on the elements and data that may constitute sculpture: materials, objects, processes, actions, duration, symbolism and even ritual.

Leslie Compan

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Project Room

## JULIEN BERTHIER «A LOST»



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### UPCOMING

January - March  
TARO IZUMI

March - April  
"The Game of Life"  
group show

May - June  
JULIEN BISMUTH  
MIKE COOTER

July  
"Jeunes Curateurs"

September - October  
NIKI DE ST PHALLE

November - December  
GILLES BARBIER

Giving onto the Paul Kos solo show in Galerie Vallois, the Project Room is occupied by Julien Berthier (born 1975).

Although neither Kos nor Berthier is averse to the notions of coincidence or accident, it must be said that this juxtaposition is not at all fortuitous. In 1988, when a student at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Julien Berthier took courses with Paul Kos at the San Francisco Art Institute. The teaching was profitable, and Berthier became another in several generations of up and coming artists to acknowledge his influence. Represented by the gallery since 2001, it was Julien who drew the attention of the Vallois to Paul Kos' work, and who initiated this new collaboration.

It is therefore not surprising if similarities are found between these two artists, at least in terms of their analyses and working methods. Sensitivity to the artistic and social context, combined with alertness to symbolic, social and economic mechanisms at work there, lead both Berthier and Kos to reveal the contradictions and absurdities of our reality with a touch at once deft and humorous.

Remarkably enough, with Berthier the object is envisioned as a catalyst, or even as a symbol of that absurdity, in that he moves between two contradictory directions: the desire for the improvement offered by the object, and the consciousness of its uselessness. In this respect Berthier's work has something of Jacques Carelman, the French decorator and illustrator known for his parody of the *Manufrance* catalogue published under the title *Catalogue d'objets introuvables* in 1969. Like Berthier's work, this encyclopaedia of practical objects maintains a sense of doubt as to the possible effectiveness of the objects.

The same can be said for the images and text here, torn between saturation and lack, a mix of too much information and too little light. That, anyway, is what *A LOST* explores. By removing from an advertising poster the term that itself signifies lack, Berthier reveals a deep loss of meaning and reduces the advertising symbol to its pure decorative function.

Leslie Coman