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THE RICHARD HOFMANN RETROSPECTIVE at BWAC

Gallery Open Weekends March 4 - April 9, 2017

The Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition is proud to present the very first retrospective of a truly remarkable and significant body of work straight out of the mid-eighties East Village. A ceaseless and prolific painter, the art of Richard Hofmann (b. 1954 – d. 1994) provides an unflinching window onto the tragic world of the young gay artist caught up in the AIDS epidemic which devastated New York just at the time as this unprecedented art scene was blossoming.

A contemporary and personal friend of David Wojnarowicz and many other artists who suffered the same fate, Hofmann's work is a rare time-capsule of work whose bold colors and iconoclastic themes leap off the canvas perhaps even more today than back then. Surviving 20 years of storage, wrapped and unseen in the cellar of a Brooklyn brownstone basement, a treasure trove of works in colossal sized canvases and mixed media, BWAC is able to bring this passionate and bone-chilling work to light for the first time.

Educated at the Pratt Institute, his style has often been characterized as owing to the school of Neo-Expressionism, but his unique use of distorted figures and a multiplicity of baleful human faces is nowhere to be found except in his own work. One critic noted that Hofmann "tackled the larger questions of sin and redemption, religion and homosexuality, suffering and ecstasy with fervid brushstrokes and layers of intense color."

Carefully curated as a chronology of his career, this retrospective evokes the heady events of Hofmann's time: both the ebullient 1980s East Village club years, and the sinister onset of AIDS in the gay community. A member of ACT-UP, his canvases juxtapose religious icons with lurid images of gay men, as he registered his protest against religion's stance on homosexuality and the public's denial of the epidemic.

Sensing a tragic ending for himself, his art also served as a means of survival. He continued to experiment with new media outside of oils through the end of his life, adapting his rich layering technique to prints, silkscreens and photomontages, even after his vision became affected in the end by the virus.

This important and powerful retrospective includes over 150 pieces of work from Hofmann's extensive legacy: large oil paintings, mixed media pieces, watercolors, silkscreens, photomontages, etchings and woodblock prints. Also included are many of his preserved murals which decorated historic 80's clubs as The Pyramid, Limbo Lounge, Danceteria, The Roxy and The Saint.

A survey of his work is available on the VisualAIDS.org website:

www.visualaids.org/artists/detail/richard-hofmann

The Richard Hofmann Retrospective is on view by appointment during the month of February, and open to the public, weekends from March 4 through April 9, noon to 4 pm. This exhibition is presented in 10,000 sq. feet of space in the BWAC Gallery in Red Hook, a few blocks from Hofmann's last studio.

BWAC is located at 481 Van Brunt, Street, Brooklyn, 11231 in a pre-civil war warehouse overlooking the New York Harbor and Statue of Liberty. It is accessible by public transportation by taking the F or G train, transferring at either Jay Street or Smith/Ninth Street and taking the B61 to the Van Brunt and Beard Street stop (across from Fairway Market and two blocks from IKEA).

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For further information, and to arrange a viewing, please contact: 917-603-2154 or rhofmannproject@gmail.com.

Website: www.richardhofmann.com