

Kayne Griffin Corcoran

ARTILLERY

Concrete Islands



Jimmie Durham, "These Twelve Bricks Were Used to Represent the Dawn Sky in Venice," 2015

Sometimes the bravest show can be one that parses its meanings seemingly by millimeters in the sheer sense structures to be elucidated between one work and the next. This is in pronounced contrast to the relatively unfiltered cascades of sensation that dominate many forms of contemporary art. Walking into this group show of diverse but subtly interconnected artists, entitled *Concrete Islands*, I initially wondered if it might be loosely inspired by **J. G. Ballard**'s dystopic novel of perilous transitions and surreal entrapment. Instead, the inspiration for curators **Douglas Fogle** and **Hanneke Skerath** comes by way of **Marcel Broodthaers**' seminal 'insincere' 1964 *Pense-Bête (Memory-Aid)* – a provocative choice at a moment when the nexus between language and meaning itself seems trapped tenuously in its own concrete chasm. Fogle and Skerath are broadly concerned with the intersections of words and objects; but the range is diverse and well-considered, from the early 1970s to the present, beginning with **Alieghiero Boetti**'s *arazzi* of vari-colored embroidery (e.g., *incontri e scontri* (1988) – indeed!) and including **Mark Manders**, **Irma Blank**, the French Fluxus artist, **Robert Filliou**, **Henri Chopin** (several of his 'dactylopoems'), a film by Turner Prize-winning **Mark (Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore) Leckey**, and a work by **Michael Dean** that (with its concrete, wire and paperback book) might be a kind of homage to Broodthaers' original *Pense-Bête* – eleven artists in all. Freshly smashed into 'concrete islands' neither particularly '*firma*' nor '*cognita*,' it might be just the right moment to revisit that treacherous zone between blank object and inscribed meaning.

Kayne Griffin Corcoran
1201 S. La Brea Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90019
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- Ezra Jean Black