

BETTER DEAD THAN RED

New Sculpture by David Buckingham

January 4- February 20, 2013

Opening Reception Saturday, January 5, 6-9 pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jonathan Ferrara Gallery is proud to announce *BETTER DEAD THAN RED*, the second solo exhibition at the gallery by artist David Buckingham. Based in Los Angeles, Buckingham is well known for his brightly colored, sculptural works of contemporary speak, made from metal the artist liberates from the detritus of America. *BETTER DEAD THAN RED* will be on view from January 4-February 20, 2013, with an artist reception Saturday, January 5th, from 6-9 pm.

Artist David Buckingham travels the High Deserts of Southern California in search of beautiful, battered metal that's had a previous life and the scars to prove it: old tractors, hay balers, cotton pickers, rice threshers, school busses, etc. With a huge rotary saw in hand, he frees the metal from its forgotten existence... cutting the raw metal to get to the pure color he desires. He drags these cherished pieces back to his studio in downtown L.A. where he "mines [his] own psyche" to create works steeped in his memory, experiences, and things that have stuck in his creative mind: a song lyric, an album cover, an overheard remark, an episode of an old TV show...experiences of a man who has lived many lifetimes in one. . . each piece a bit of a self-excavation. As a darling of the ad word in his past life, Buckingham has had popular culture pounded into his brain for over 50 years... and in his artwork it all comes screaming back out in metal.

Buckingham says of his latest exhibition:

As usual, in my studio practice I continue a journey of self-exploration ...in metal. Most of the work is very personal -things that I've internalized over the years, which are now coming back out of me.. For instance, I was in rehab with Ole Dirty Bastard and I heard him say 'Nigga please" about a million times. I chewed that over for years, and now that I've exorcised that demon, it's gone.

Ya know, it's funny, I was telling someone recently that I can remember the first dirty joke I ever heard, but I can't remember a thing from my college philosophy classes.. Kierkegaard who? I love language and all its convolutions, slang.

This time I've reached a little deeper into my psyche, gone out on a limb a little bit more, basically I've really opened a vein here and I think it shows in the work. Yes, some of it isn't quite conventional, but then neither am I, and strong medicine doesn't always taste good.

I remember the phrase BETTER DEAD THAN RED from when I was a kid, vestiges of McCarthyism were still hanging around in the early 60's and I think it's a punchy line, as well as provocative. Says so much with so few words. I like to think the new work does as well, each piece is like a portal into my thinking, also there's a good bit of self-revelation in there -if you know how to look.

Raised in New Orleans, David Buckingham received a degree in Communications and a career in Survival. With an advertising background, Buckingham worked at agencies in Boston, New York, Australia, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

In the early 90's he met Ray "Cowboy" Kelly, who had started a Lower East Side movement called Rivington School, a group of anarchist welders and poets who had taken over an abandoned lot on Rivington Street and built weird scrap metal towers. They were also working out of an abandoned gas station at the corner of 2nd and B in New York where he got his first welding lesson. Buckingham began to weld in earnest upon arrival to LA in 1999 and from there his career snowballed.

He became obsessed with making art; venturing into the Mojave Desert he discovered tons of old, battered colorful metal and began to work exclusively with those materials. Having spent 20 years as a professional writer, text and word play an important role in his work. Lines from movies are one vein of his work reflecting the major role the movie business plays in LA and their pervasive impact on our cultural identity. Cartoon sound effects, guns of infamous assassins, text lines from movies and famous sayings all created from the man-made detritus of a desert landscape.

Naturally Buckingham's work is in the collections of several Hollywood luminaries in addition to other prominent collections including Steven Bochco, Josh Groban, Gwen Stefani, Seth Rogen, Perez Hilton, Prada/Milan and the Cisneros Foundation.

Buckingham's work has been shown in New York, St. Louis, Berlin, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and New Orleans.

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