

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Jimmy Raskin
Inseparability vs. Simultaneity

Dates: January 31 – March 14, 2010

Reception: Sunday, January 31, 6 – 8PM

Opening on Sunday, January 31st, Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to present *Inseparability vs. Simultaneity*, Jimmy Raskin's second one-person exhibition at the gallery.

The title of the show alludes to a 'conflict-concept,' a deep structure that has fueled Raskin's work since the beginning. It refers to the knot, to the tension that exists between two fundamental modes of expression he has at once described, unleashed, tested, and worked through in polymorphous ways since 1989. Over the years, a constantly evolving string of texts, collages, diagrams, sculptures, props, lecture-performances and videos, has been articulated from these conflicting forces.

Simply put, 'Simultaneity' is the descriptive quality of elements unfolding in concurrent states, through the understanding that it is the *difference* between the elements that is primary, maintained by the driving force of *critical-distance*. 'Inseparability' is its opposite: a state of amalgamation that has its back to difference and distance, and leans towards a claim of connection that distinctly *lacks* critical-distance. Here, one thing believes itself to be indistinguishable from the other. It implies an impenetrability. It insinuates an ending or a beginning, not a perpetual unfolding, as implied in the layering of Simultaneity. Inseparability claims to be singular, Simultaneity plural.

In a culture dominated by Simultaneity and its influence on self-reflective subjectivity, Raskin's disposition is to locate subjects that refrain from engaging in such critical-enhancement – and fail as a result. "Just when are they allowed to exist as inspiration," he might be said to ask? By contrast to Simultaneity, Inseparability is, or should be, uncommon. It calls to mind Stephen Hawking's description of a Black Hole. Inseparability occurs where and when all dynamic, interacting forces 'stop' and become one singular force, a point in space-time that can lead to only one place: a new realm not of our own, as such *inaccessible*, this most desirable place in the universe! In brief, Inseparability is 'the unknown' realized, not as a realm to remain unexplained, but a place where all things as we know them break down to form something unavoidably new: the event, the one that affects all (as we now know Black Holes force out other universes, and the Big-Bang is the result of others.) Here laws, behaviors and properties, as we understand them, no matter how exquisitely simultaneous and 'interesting,' break down into a moment of 'naked singularity,' where vulnerability meets unstoppable power in a last gasp of unity.

"It should not be surprising, says Raskin, that my interest in the role of The Poet brought me to parallel Black Holes with expression itself. I dreamt of this rare occurrence when the right words, structure, images, rhythm, interpretations, reflections and intent all merge under their own peculiar force, pulling all elements *within*, as if through a cone to a single point where all interpretation collapses, as things peak to an unstoppable point of pure affirmation and instinctual inspiration. As it were, we would be at once frozen and re-charged with genuine surprise, inspired by a new-felt obligation, with no room for subversion. This is certainly not a state of Simultaneity."

Lately, Raskin has dwelled less on the possibility of such rare Events and focused more on the notion of Inseparability as simply a 'false' state, one that actually helps realize Simultaneity by reinserting critical-distance into misperceptions. As we know in general, The Poet can not stay away from interacting with the preceding nature of language, of interpretation, of his or her own subjectivity and all the conditions thereof. Raskin has concentrated on Simultaneity because of its close relationship to 'Juxtapositioning,' the most common tool of

contemporary expression. They both *suspend* notions, and privilege critical-distance. Simultaneity and Juxtapositioning imply an inability to pin-down a singular topic or *conclude*. They imply duration. In a sense, Simultaneity favors 'Indeterminism.' It is also a primary feature of The New Being, the one who has overcome the inevitable indeterminism of nature, body, and thought. He or she bypasses the myth of Inseparability, and becomes a partner of chance and The Openness of things.

After a prolonged residency in 'The Prologue' of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Raskin steps out of this ideally suited, auxiliary space of exploration. As the modes of Inseparability and Simultaneity become a more distinct conceptual framework, an unexpected page has turned, offering him the opportunity to reflect upon the anxiety that still prevails in his journey as a freshly revealed expresser...

The stimulant for this exhibition is the brief, yet potent poem, *Vowels*, by Arthur Rimbaud. Yes it stands in proximity to *Bottom*, another poem that recently gave Raskin the figure of the 'donkey,' but it is peculiar. It incredibly articulates the issues that arise when placing Inseparability close to Simultaneity. *Vowels* carries a curious paradox. It is also an exceptional display for contemporary expression, delivered in two pivotal 'acts':

In the opening verse, Rimbaud addresses 'the arbitrary nature of language' by matching colors to vowels – 'The First Juxtaposition.' He then proceeds to exemplify 'the lyrical collage' – 'The Infinite Juxtaposition.' It is as if one led to the other, as if affirming the arbitrary is the key to the openness of things. But what is most striking in this poem is a seemingly unnecessary verse inserted between these two essential parts of the text:

I shall tell, one day, of your mysterious origins:

What to make of such a verse, a thought that places the author back center stage? Why such posturing after addressing 'the arbitrary,' and before 'the modern collage'? It is a line of unnecessary vanity that assumes The Poet to be present with The Poem – inseparable from his task and from language itself. It is a line of self-seduction and faith. And thus, in the midst of a great example of expression – in which new combinations are created through semiotic intensity and lyrical oddities – is also evidence of a need for critique. The Poet of vanity *must be confronted*, even if he is, through such a misstep, giving us groundbreaking inspiration! The arbitrary addressed in the opening verse should *not* have led to a vain declaration of The Self, as if he is The One capable of delivering divine secrets. Rather than self-mythologizing, one would expect to witness a separation between Language, Meaning, and The Author. One might notice that The Poet marries colors to vowels directly, without a need for verbs (A black, E white, I red, etc). The bind to him is impenetrable – *believed-in*. We then witness the results of such an Inseparability between Poet, Poem and Poetry itself. Indeed, Rimbaud tells us that his association with the arbitrary nature of language will not be in service of separating The Author from The Text. He understands himself to be 'of-consequence' to expression, and thus seeks to magnify that inevitability, using lyrical collage as evidence of a Self bound to Poetry. Unequivocally, The Poet is present, required, assumed... *fundamental*. Like with the rare occurrence of a Black Hole, we are confronted with an instance of Inseparability that leads to wondrous, new Simultaneity. We are witnesses of a self-imposed intensity.

Rimbaud once stated:

I wrote down silences and nights and notated the inexpressible. I gave a fixed point to vertigo.

Today we might identify with the second phrase: We begin each day with the forethought to enact purposeful perpetuities, ostentatious oddities and sentimental subversions. But we no longer recognize the first two notions, the ones relating to *only I can listen to what no one else can hear, and only I will write what was otherwise declared impossible!* Impossible? How about matching colors to vowels? A suitable linguistic exercise, perhaps, but no longer the gateway to the seer.

Raskin's exhibition will amplify the anxiety of Rimbaud's paradox: one cuts apart The Poet, doing one's job,

while secretly desiring to live the fantasy of Inseparability. He will begin by extracting that arrogant verse, and consider the consequences. He will attempt to interpret Rimbaud's sublime collages as an exercise in relevance. There will be models of lecture stations for critiquing Poets and their midnight vandalism. We will see a sculpture of 'The Disciple' who did not understand subversion and therefore remains stuck in permanent dismay. We will discover cones of origin, where one world begins and another ends. Further, in a final assemblage or 'last call,' in Peter Pan like fashion, Raskin will not refrain from resurrecting props and ghost-images from his long standing interpretation of 'The Prologue' of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This revered text remains, for him, one of the most potent narratives in which The Poet of Inseparability is valued as the one who must be left behind.

Jimmy Raskin's work is currently included in the major exhibition For the blind man in the dark room looking for the black cat that isn't there, curated by Anthony Huberman at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis through January 3, 2010. The show travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (February 5 – April 4). A slightly modified version of the exhibition appears at the ICA, London (December 3, 2009 – January 31, 2010); de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam (February 13 – March 28); and Culturgest, Lisbon (May – August). Andrea Bellini of Artissima, recently invited Raskin to present The Disciple's Premature Nostalgia at the Cavallerizza Reale, Turin. A different version of the lecture-performance, A Certain Misgiving in the Disciple, was produced for The Prompt, curated by Sarina Basta for Performa 09, New York.

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

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Gallery hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM
Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street or J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street