

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Raymond Pettibon at Regen Projects

Tressa Berman · Wednesday, October 21st, 2020

From Black Flag to MOMA, the work of Raymond Pettibon, if not known to you by now, has been hiding in plain sight for decades. His punk sensibilities have honest roots in the movement, and his word-coded images are no less a cold slap to get woke. Pettibon doesn't mince words, he serves them up without dressing (e.g., *American Imperialism*, part Pollack gesture, part de-construction of Jasper Johns' flags), as amuses-bouches in portrait amalgams (*My Uncle Looked a Lot Like Shakespeare*), to the whipped gestures of pieces like *Fluff*, a seamless spectrum of blue rush.



No Title (Fluff.) 2020; Ink and acrylic on paper; 22 1/2 x 30 inches (57.2 x 76.2 cm); © Raymond Pettibon, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

At Regen Projects through October 31, the current exhibition brings curatorial order to his far-ranging subjects, of which I can only offer a modest sampling. The first grouping rounds up Pettibon's passion for baseball, and is a seemingly innocent opener to other relational nods to pop cultural icons, though in the latter case, we can't tell whether we are "with" the artist or "against" his representations of the truth behind the facts. Even in baseball as corporate industry, there is always more than meets the eye. The drawings and paintings cast a paradoxical spell, and one that might only be resolved long after the viewer has left the scene. With eyes wide shut, the image has left its mark.



No Title (Who wonders in) 2020; Ink and acrylic on paper; 44 1/2 x 30 1/8 inches (113 x 76.5 cm); © Raymond Pettibon, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

In particular, for this viewer, the grouping of illuminated manuscript extractions, typographical, Greco-Roman abstractions, hang in the balance of ink to paper, paper to wall, ancient to modern. Read like a scroll, splayed by coincidental coherence, and in their enlarged glyph-like forms, these symbols seem to reveal something more intimate about the artist. An inner "I" at work. Not one to dwell long in reverence, Pettibon brings us back to whimsy in the Gumby series, although set in the artist's (and my own) generational matrix of icons turned archetypes, they could be considered a form of his persona, as well as among the first television media stars – pumping out merch faster than a Rage Against the Machine concert. There's also something sweet in the mix, akin to nostalgia, and also because in the COVID world of exhibitions, even stepping foot into an art gallery evokes a reminiscence, a simulacrum of the familiar. In some respects, Pettibon's work can take us there: At once present through confrontation and reconciliation with the past (consider

Sirhan Sirhan's visual testimonial), while at the same time, transcendent and cleansing as the pointed waves that punctuate the gallery groupings and bring us to our senses.



No Title (I have to) 2019; Acrylic, ink, graphite, and colored pencil on paper; 30 1/4 x 44 1/4 inches (76.8 x 112.4 cm); © Raymond Pettibon, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

To schedule a gallery visit or for inquiries, contact: Regen Projects, 6750 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90038. Tel. 310 276 5424

Top image: No Title (Str8Line) 2020

Acrylic and ink on paper

59 x 99 inches (149.9 x 251.5 cm)

© Raymond Pettibon, Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

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