

# Anton van Dalen

## *New Works and the Avenue A Cut-Out Theatre*

February 13 – March 14, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, February 13, 6-8 pm

*Avenue A Cut-Out Theatre* performance: Sat. Feb. 28 at 7pm



**P·P·O·W** is pleased to present an exhibition by Anton van Dalen, the artist's first show with the gallery and first solo exhibition in eight years. Since 1972 Van Dalen has lived in the East Village, documenting the ever-changing culture of the neighborhood through paintings, drawings, prints, stencils, collage works and performances that captured the evolving history of the place.

Van Dalen, who grew up in Holland, was captivated by the vibrancy, violence and cultural diversity of his neighborhood. As a child Van Dalen was influenced by the European Masters from Rembrandt to Van Gogh, as well as contemporary artists like Saul Steinberg, who took as subject matter their quotidian surroundings. Drawing on their practice as a source of inspiration, Van Dalen took to the streets, documenting the people and landscapes that surrounded him, creating a body of work that reads as a social and cultural documentation of one of New York's most dynamic neighborhoods.

For Van Dalen this practice was more than just a creative process, it was a social and political directive as well. Van Dalen named his house PEACE, brandishing it with a stenciled sign that remains in place today. He collaborated and worked alongside artists like Sue Coe, David Wojnarowicz, Martin Wong, and Keith Haring, who believed fervently that artists had to leave the studio for the streets to reflect on the issues plaguing the city and to take a stand against gentrification and related inequities.

The exhibition at P.P.O.W will feature new paintings by Van Dalen that present the now largely gentrified East Village populated with upscale bars, fast food restaurants, and well-heeled women. While Van Dalen's works do not aspire towards Photorealism, they do seek to create an accurate documentation of place, combining an imaginative aesthetic that features abstracted humans, skeletal animals and dramatically angled buildings, set against carefully detailed street signs documenting a specific place at a particular moment in time.

Van Dalen's depiction of a changed East Village is reflected in a shift in color palette, media and texture as well. Interested in mirroring what he describes as "the colors of our time," his most recent body of work forgoes his black and white nightscapes in favor of a palette that mimics the light of flat screens, cell phones and computers. Despite this shift, much of the iconic imagery that has shaped Van Dalen's formal vocabulary remains. His works are peopled with rabbits and pigeons – symbols of nature that recall his early days in Holland – as well as cars and religious institutions that have formed the backdrop of his East Village works for decades.

Van Dalen will also exhibit, and perform, his work *Avenue A Cut-Out Theatre*, a portable model of his house, which he uses as a staging ground for telling the story of the evolution of the East Village. This one-man show incorporates a rotating selection of miniature cut outs and props that each contain a story about the neighborhood from the 1970s until the present. This performance has traveled throughout the United States and Europe, and has been performed at The Drawing Center and the Museum of Modern Art.

The exhibition will be complimented by a solo booth, at ADAA's The Art Show, of the artist's 1970's and early 80's graphite drawings and stencils. Taken together, the two installations act as a retrospective of sorts for the East Village and, on a larger level, serve as a reflection of the changing nature of inner-city life.

**Anton van Dalen** was born in Amstelveen, Holland and lives in New York City. He has been included in group exhibitions at notable institutions including the: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; New Museum, New York; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, and the New York Historical Society. He has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at: Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia; University Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and Exit Art, New York. *Avenue A Cut-Out Theatre* has toured since 1995 both nationally and internationally, and has been shown at numerous institutions including The Drawing Center, the Museum of Modern Art, and The New York Historical Society.