

David Wojnarowicz

Art Basel, Switzerland
June 19 – 22, 2014

Feature Section
Booth G11



P·P·O·W is pleased to present a solo booth of major historical paintings, sculptures, photographs and films by David Wojnarowicz (1955 – 1992). Wojnarowicz channeled a vast accumulation of raw images, sounds, memories and lived experiences into a powerful voice that was an undeniable presence in the New York City art scene of the 1970s, 80s and early 90s. Through his several volumes of fiction, poetry, memoirs, painting, photography, installation, sculpture, film and performance, Wojnarowicz left a legacy, affirming art's vivifying power in a society he viewed as alienating and corrosive. His use of blunt semiotics and graphic illustrations exposed what he felt the mainstream repressed: poverty, abuse of power, blind nationalism, greed, homophobia and the devastation of the AIDS epidemic.

The booth will exhibit an overview of Wojnarowicz's most important works starting with the now famous "Rimbaud Series" dating from 1978. In the early and mid 80's Wojnarowicz became well known for his spray painted supermarket posters exhibited in the East Village and developed a series of paintings that graphically illustrate his deft collagist hand at combining the painted image and text over dollar bills, sheet music and maps. In the late 80's when AIDS encroached and eventually stole the lives of countless friends and mentors Wojnarowicz's work became more pointed as the voice of the powerless and the enemy of the conservative right. The booth will include such works as *Excavating the Temple Gods* (1986), *One Day This Kid* (1990), *Christ with Ants* (1988-89) along with other historic paintings and photographs Wojnarowicz created in his last years. Iconic sculptures *Bread* (1988-89) and *Science Lesson in 3D* (1984) will also be exhibited as well as his rarely seen films *Heroin* (1987) and *Beautiful People* (1987).

David Wojnarowicz was born in 1954 in Red Bank, New Jersey. From 1970 until 1973, he lived on the streets of New York City as a street hustler. In the 1990s he fought and successfully issued an injunction against Donald Wildmon and the American Family Association for their distortion of his work in violation of the New York Artists' Authorship Rights Act. Wojnarowicz died of AIDS-related complications on July 22, 1992 at the age of 37. His artwork has been included in solo and group exhibitions around the world, at institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The American Center, Paris, France; The Busan Museum of Modern Art, Korea; Centro Galego de Art Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain; Barbican Art Gallery, London; and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne Germany. His works are in permanent collections of major museums internationally and are the subject of significant scholarly studies. Highly influential to the current generation of artists, writers and activists, his work continues to be subject of important exhibitions. Wojnarowicz has been the subject of two retrospectives, at the galleries of the Illinois State University in 1990 curated by Barry Blinderman and at the New Museum in 1999 curated by Dan Cameron. Among his numerous books, published by Random House and Grove Press, among others, his memoir, "Close to the Knives" has recently been translated into French. Recently historian Cynthia Carr released an acclaimed biography on Wojnarowicz entitled *Fire in the Belly*. In 2014, Wojnarowicz's work will be featured in an upcoming exhibition *Take it or Leave it: Institution, Image, Ideology* at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. The Whitney Museum of American Art will present a retrospective of Wojnarowicz's work in the Spring of 2016.