



Mike Kelley
Singles' Mixer

November 4, 2017 – January 28, 2018

Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce the opening of *Singles' Mixer*, a multi-part video and sculptural installation by the American artist Mike Kelley.

Mike Kelley (1954 – 2012) was a visionary artist whose complex and diverse body of work forges an incisive exploration into the underpinnings of violence within American culture. He rose to prominence in the 1980s with a series of sculptures in which he assembled discarded children's toys and blankets to create ebullient works that hinged on despair. Traces of neglect, trauma, and other forms of abuse thread throughout the objects and social rituals represented within his practice. His work altogether remains defiantly irreverent, using humor and absurdity as a tactic for subversion.

One of Kelley's most ambitious works is his monumental theater-turned-vaudeville installation entitled *Day is Done* (2005). Comprised of thirty-one "reconstructions," *Day is Done* presents a collection of vignettes whose narratives are sourced from high school yearbook photographs depicting extracurricular activities. According to Kelley, afterschool activities such as clubs, sports, and dances are structured around socially accepted rituals that incite psychological stress, to which the mind reacts with a mechanism for subconscious repression. *Day is Done* attempts to recover such lapses in memory through a medley of imagery, props, and performances that loosely formulate a theatrical play.

On view at Luhring Augustine Bushwick is *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #8 (Singles' Mixer)*, one of the many "reconstructions" within the larger production of *Day is Done*. Situated at its center is a multi-channel video featuring an eclectic group of characters identified by Kelley as a computer nerd, hillbilly, Kiss fan, witch, and four African American women. While they engage in a seemingly innocuous conversation about their dream men, insinuations about class differences, racial stereotypes, and sexuality gradually surface. The script is ostensibly fictional, though the nature of their exchange approximates real and relatable interactions occurring in society today. Fusing his personal history of abuse with references to popular culture, Kelley encourages viewers to project their own set of experiences and memories upon the work, piecing together a collective shared abuse which the artist sought to remedy.

Born in 1954 in Detroit, MI, Kelley received his B.A. in 1976 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and his M.F.A. in 1978 from the California Institute of Art, Valencia. In his lifetime, Kelley held solo exhibitions at numerous institutions worldwide, including the Musée du Louvre, Paris; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Tate Liverpool; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C, among many others. A retrospective of his work was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2012, and subsequently traveled to MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2013); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2013); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2014).

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