

# Adams and Ollman

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*Dear John*

March 19 – April 17, 2021

James Castle with Evgeny Antufiev, Katherine Bradford, Andrew Cranston, Vaginal Davis, Lois Dodd, Ficus Interfaith, Nick Goss, Jessica Jackson Hutchins, Chris Johanson, David Korty, Isaac Tin Wei Lin, Sarah McEneaney, Ryan McLaughlin, Jeffrey Mitchell, Dina No, Hilary Pecis, Conny Purtill, Emily Mae Smith, Becky Suss, Ricky Swallow and Willa Wasserman.

In collaboration with Fleisher/Ollman Gallery (Philadelphia), and conceived as a special tribute to the maverick art dealer John Ollman, Adams and Ollman is pleased to present a group exhibition featuring major works by James Castle (1899–1977) in conversation with a range of contemporary artists. The exhibition will celebrate John Ollman's 50th anniversary as an art dealer and his legacy as one of the preeminent champions and scholars of self-taught art in the United States. Ollman has challenged conventional hierarchies, championed a wide range of artforms, and pursued varied interests from ethnographic to 20th and 21st century self-taught art in his fifty-year career. We celebrate John Ollman with a presentation of works by James Castle, whose work Ollman first exhibited in 1998 and continued to champion from the discovery stage through recognition by major museums.

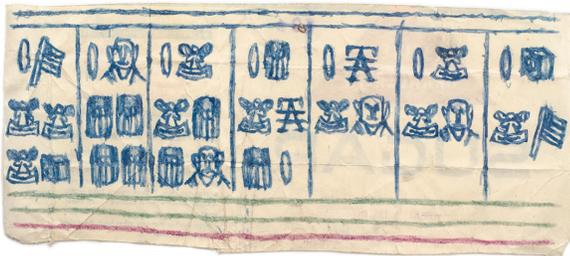
Born profoundly deaf and believed never to have learned to read, write, or sign, James Castle spent his lifetime making art on his family's farm in Idaho. Creating sophisticated drawings, books, and sculptures from humble materials such as discarded envelopes, matchboxes, twine, and soot, Castle produced a complex body of work: one that is not only deeply personal—as it intimately documents the artist's life and surroundings—but also provides

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the viewer with a fascinating glimpse into rural American life and landscape of the last century.

*Dear John* includes examples of Castle’s sensitive, atmospheric drawings on unfolded matchboxes. On one side of these iconic works, Castle documents details of the remote landscape surrounding him—barns, telephone poles, trees, and mountains. On the other, he details the interior of his family’s home and barns. These domestic objects and animals are also the subject of several sculptural constructions fashioned from cardboard, string, and pigment, which are on view along with examples of his artist books, “symbol pages” and patterned drawings.



The exhibition will bring these select works by Castle together with paintings, drawings, sculpture, and works on paper by contemporary artists that share key themes and universal impulses that cross time, place, and intention. Much like Ollman’s direct and indirect influence on the field of self-taught art and new generations of gallerists, artists, and writers, Castle’s work continues to reverberate.



“My training was in sculpture and when I first saw James Castle’s work in person, I felt it was so dialed into the physicality of making work—from his drawings to constructions, to his language and books. Contemporary artists bonded with the undiluted passion, depth and meaning found in his creativity and remain his most steadfast champions.”

—John Ollman

Coinciding with the presentation at Adams and Ollman will be a companion exhibition at JTT (New York) and an online archival presentation by Fleisher/Ollman. The exhibition will be accompanied by a text by William Pym.

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## Images:

James Castle, *Untitled*, n.d., soot and saliva on found paper, 3 1/4 x 5 1/4 inches.

Sarah McEaney, *Spring Summer 2019, 2020*, acrylic and collage on wood, 47 3/4 x 71 3/4 inches.

Ryan McLaughlin, *Untitled*, 2017, oil on linen on MDF, 36 x 25 inches.

James Castle, *Untitled*, n.d., color of unknown origin on sugar bag, 3 3/4 x 8 1/2 inches.

Evgeny Antufiev, *Untitled*, 2020, bronze, 8 x 5 x 2 inches. © Evgeny Antufiev. Courtesy of the artist and Emalin, London.

James Castle, *Untitled*, n.d., soot and saliva on found paper with string, 5 1/2 x 7 1/4 inches.