

# ULAY

11 January – 23 February 2019

Private view: Thursday 10 January, 6–8pm



Richard Saltoun Gallery's first solo exhibition with ULAY focuses on the artist's remarkable photography and his long-standing commitment to exploring and expanding the medium. Starting with Ulay's early works in Polaroid from the 1970s, the exhibition spans to include performative photography, featuring new works exhibited to the public for the first time, as well as a film of one of his most important actions. The exhibition has been curated by Birte Kleemann.

Ulay is an unclassifiable artist whose trajectory amounts to a radically and historically unique oeuvre operating at the intersection of photography and the conceptually-oriented approaches of Performance and Body art. In the early 1970s, after training as a photographer, Ulay worked extensively as a consultant for Polaroid, which inspired him to start experimenting with the analogue camera and the instant photography it provided. Taking hundreds of self-portraits, each manipulated in a myriad of ways, Ulay developed an approach that was novel in both method and subject matter, using the camera as a tool to investigate and modify identity whilst exploring socially constructed notions of gender. By presenting himself in works like *S'he* (from the series *Renaissance*, 1973–74) as an 'incoherent' gendered being – half man, half woman – Ulay questioned not only his own sexual identity but also the hybrid, fluid nature of sexuality.

After exhausting the search for self-identity, Ulay embraced a photographic approach where he identified through others, depicting those deemed on the 'outside' of mainstream of society. In *Irritation – There is a Criminal Touch to Art* (1976), Ulay takes on the role of artist as social provocateur, using his work to comment on both the plight of the Turkish community in Germany, as well as the institutionalisation of art. Whilst accompanying his long-time collaborator Marina Abramović to Berlin, and weighed down by the city's history, Ulay stole the 19th-century painting *The Poor Poet* by Carl Spitzweg, an artist and painting admired by Hitler, from the Neue Nationalgalerie. Escaping the museum's guards, Ulay drove to Kreuzberg, a then segregated community of Turkish immigrants, and after informing the museum of his plan, installed the work in the living room of a Turkish family. Included in the exhibition at Richard Saltoun Gallery are photographs of the action, shown alongside a film describing the event.

ULAY (b. 1943, Solingen, Germany), the pseudonym of Frank Uwe Laysiepen, currently lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Ljubljana, Slovenia. Recent solo exhibitions and performances have been held at Depart Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2017); Cooper Gallery, Dundee, UK (2017); Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany (2016–2017); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, Switzerland (2016); Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2015); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2015); Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom (2013); C-Space, Beijing, China (2011); and National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA), Moscow, Russia (2007). His work, along with his many collaborations with Marina Abramović, is featured in collections of major institutions around the world, including the Stedelijk Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, Kunstmuseum Bern, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

Birte Kleemann has curated exhibitions with Rose Wylie and Pat O'Neill, as well as the group exhibition 'Shakers and Movers', performance art in Germany from the late 1950s to 1970s, featuring artists Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Jürgen Klauke, Valie EXPORT and many more – all for VW Berlin, Germany. In addition to her role as an

independent curator, she has been Director of Michael Werner Gallery New York since 2011. For the gallery, she has organised the exhibition 'Jörg Immendorff: LIDL Works and Performances from the 60s', as well as other museum projects, such as Markus Lüpertz at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia in 2014 and A.R. Penck at Fosun Foundation, Shanghai, China in 2017. She is co-curator of a forthcoming survey show about art in Germany from the past 100 years with Nanjing University's AMNUA Museum, opening March 2019. Kleemann is also the founding Art Editor of the fashion magazine KingKong, where features included: Edward Kienholz, Judith Bernstein, Ericka Beckmann, ULAY, Henri Levy, Ed Atkins, Adrian Piper and Peter Saul. Previously, she was Director at PACE Gallery, where she curated the survey 'Joseph Beuys: Make the Secrets Productive' and the extensive group exhibition 'Berlin2000'. Prior to living in New York, Kleemann was Director at Galerie EIGEN+ART Berlin for six years and co-founded a contemporary gallery in the city in 2007. Further curatorial projects include 'Misericordia' at Prism LA, bringing together baroque art work with contemporary installations, and 'Praxis' at Wayne State University, Detroit, focusing on the diverse political movements of the US-Vietnam war era.

## Richard Saltoun Gallery

Founded in 2012, Richard Saltoun Gallery is based in Mayfair, London. The gallery supports contemporary artists, with a special emphasis on Feminist, Conceptual and Performance artists from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet underrepresented artists through a yearly exhibition programme at its location on Dover Street and participation in numerous art fairs around the world.

Active on both the primary and secondary market, Richard Saltoun Gallery has established a leading reputation for promoting and exhibiting the work of female artists, including Helena Almeida, Eleanor Antin, Renate Bertlmann, Lili Dujourie, Rose English, VALIE EXPORT, Gina Pane, Penny Slinger and Greta Schödl, amongst others. Additionally, the gallery supports and exhibits artists who have contributed to the fields of Conceptual and Performance art, including Victor Burgin, Bob Law, John Hilliard, Sylvester Houédard, Gustavo Pérez Monzón, Annegret Soltau, Edgardo Antonio Vigo, ULAY, Marie Yates and more. Until recently, many of these innovative and experimental artists were largely ignored by the broader international art world.

Richard Saltoun Gallery is dedicated to preserving the legacy of artists through its representation of artist estates, including Helen Chadwick, Henri Chopin, David Hall, Ed Herring, Nigel Henderson, Bob Law, Bice Lazzari, Tony Morgan, Jo Spence and Shelagh Wakely.

## Gallery information

Opening hours:  
Monday to Tuesday, 10am–6pm  
Saturday, 11am–5pm  
Or by appointment

E: [info@richardsaltoun.com](mailto:info@richardsaltoun.com)

T: +44 (0) 207 637 1225

Instagram: @richardsaltoungallery

Twitter: @RSaltounGallery

Facebook: @RichardSaltounGallery

## For press enquiries, please contact

Caterina Berardi

Pickles PR

E: [caterina@picklespr.com](mailto:caterina@picklespr.com)

T: +44 7907 487074

Image: Ulay, *S'he*, 1973. Auto-Polaroid type 107, 8.5 x 10.8 cm © Ulay