

Terry Allen

GHOST SHIP RODEZ: The Momo Chronicles

On view at L.A. Louver: 10 March – 16 April 2011

Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, 10 March, 6-8 p.m.



Terry Allen
Momo Chronicle IV: Rodez, Volver; ...Several Disturbing Things in the Future, 2009, gouache, pastel, color pencil, graphite, press type, spackle, collage elements, 56 1/2 x 46 1/2 in. (143.5 x 118.1 cm)

The inner life of any true artist has the traits of three essential characters: children (they are innocent), criminals (they break rules), and the insane (they inhabit another world). Artaud lived this construct precisely, consistently reaching beyond everything... body, language, sex, society, disease, God, and art itself...whether in word, image, object or performance.

-----Terry Allen

Venice, CA---- L.A. Louver is pleased to present a new multimedia, multi-dimensional exhibition by Terry Allen that includes two video/sculpture installations, a sound-based environment, and over a dozen multi-paneled works on paper. In ***GHOST SHIP RODEZ: The Momo Chronicles***, Allen pursues a fictional investigation of what may have happened in the mind of French artist, playwright and actor Antonin Artaud during a 17-day journey restrained in the dark hold of the freighter Washington in 1937, and later, in various mental institutions.

While living in France, Artaud had obtained a walking stick that he considered was the staff of Jesus Christ handed down to St. George. In 1937, Artaud journeyed to Ireland to return the staff to its country of origin. However, while there, he experienced a series of extreme mental and emotional crises that culminated in a violent altercation with Dublin police. Artaud's subsequent deportation to France was a grueling journey, which he spent straitjacketed and chained to a metal cot in the bowels of the ship.

Allen developed this visual and sound-based exhibition from his ideas and sets for a theatre piece, also titled *Ghost Ship Rodez*. The theatre work was first commissioned in 2005 by Les Substances Laboratoire

International, Lyon, France and the Texas-French Alliance in Houston. It was further developed at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in 2008, and The Lensic Performing Art Center in association with SITE Santa Fe (where the L.A. Louver exhibition was previously shown) in Spring 2010. A live performance will not be seen in Los Angeles at this time. However, a 40-minute recording of the performance features in the installation that is presented in L.A. Louver's south gallery. In this sound-based piece, acclaimed actress, writer and artist Jo Harvey Allen performs as the voice of "Daughter of the Heart," a clairvoyant chameleon and multi-voiced narrator. (Artaud regarded all the important women in his life as his "Daughters of the Heart to be Born".) *GHOST SHIP RODEZ (A Radio Play)* is also available on CD.

The exhibition will also feature two large-scale video/sculpture works: *Ghost Ship*, 2010, evokes the environment of the ship hold and the cot to which Artaud was laid captive, and includes screens with projected excerpts of films in which Artaud performed. The second, *MOMO Lo Mismo*, 2010, is a video-based multi-screened installation presented in marionette form, with projections of Jo Harvey Allen's "Daughter of the Heart" performance.

Antonin Artaud

Sunsets are beautiful because of all they make us lose.

-----Antonin Artaud

Artaud spent much of his childhood in sanatoriums, and it was during one of his prolonged stays that he was prescribed opiates, to which he became addicted throughout his life. Confined to bed for many years, Artaud absorbed himself in the study and appreciation of literature and art, with Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Poe important influences in his own development as a poet and artist. Artaud also became an actor, and he appeared in numerous films, including Abel Gance's 1927 masterpiece *Napoleon*, and Carl Dryer's 1928 *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. Artaud's acting career helped subsidize his radical theatre ideas, for which he became renowned. His theories for a "Theatre of Cruelty" (also the title of an essay in his book *The Theatre and Its Double*) advocated a revolutionary theatre in which the audience was pushed to experience the world in shocking and destabilizing ways. Artaud's theories continue to impact and inspire contemporary artists as diverse as Peter Brook, Nancy Spiro, Patti Smith and Sam Shepherd, among others.

Artaud called himself "Le Momo," meaning a charmed idiot or a witch man, possessed. The clinical depression and severe emotional illness that Artaud suffered throughout his life led to his frequent confinement in mental institutions, one of which was Rodez, in southern France. Artaud died of cancer in 1948.

Terry Allen

Terry Allen is a visual artist, songwriter and musician, who has received numerous awards and honors, including Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and induction into the Buddy Holly Walk of Fame. In 2009, Allen became a United States Artists Oliver Fellow. His art has been shown throughout the United States and Europe, and is represented in major private and public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

GHOST SHIP RODEZ: The Momo Chronicles marks the first time Allen's work has been seen in Los Angeles since Spring 2004, with his presentation of *DUGOUT I* at L.A. Louver; a concurrent exhibition *DUGOUT II (HOLD ON to the house)* at Santa Monica Museum of Art; and performance piece *DUGOUT III: WARBOY (and the backboard blues)* with L.A. Theatre Works at the Skirball Cultural Center (later broadcast by KPCC 89.3 FM).

Allen has recorded eleven albums of original music, including the classics *Juarez*, *Lubbock (on everything)* and *Salivation*. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico with his wife, actress and writer Jo Harvey Allen.

Related Program

Terry Allen in conversation with Dave Hickey, Sunday, 6 March 2011, 4-6 p.m. Art Catalogues Bookstore, Ahmanson Building, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

To celebrate the publication of TERRY ALLEN, the artist's first comprehensive monograph, Terry Allen and author Dave Hickey will continue their long-time conversation about the artist's endlessly evolving art, installations and music. Free, no reservations <http://www.lacma.org/programs>

TERRY ALLEN is published by the University of Texas Press and includes text by Dave Hickey, and essays by Marcia Tucker and Michael Ventura.



Terry Allen *Ghost Ship*, 2010, mixed media variable dimensions, ship suspended approximately 4' above floor
168 x 180 x 120 in. (426.7 x 457.2 x 304.8 cm)

Concurrently on view at L.A. Louver

Second Floor Gallery **Rebecca Campbell: *Romancing the Apocalypse*** (new paintings)

Skyroom **Joel Shapiro** (sculpture)

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