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TERRY ALLEN

FRIEZE LOS ANGELES

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L.A. Louver at Frieze Los Angeles 2024
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Santa Monica Airport,
Santa Monica, CA
Stand C12

Media Contact:
Darius Sabbaghzadeh
darius@hellonthirdeye.com
Kyle Hinton
kyle@hellonthirdeye.com

45 N Venice Blvd
Venice CA 90291
info@lalouper.com
310 822 4955
lalouper.com



Terry Allen
Prologue... Cowboy & The Stranger, 1969
mixed media on paper

framed: 38 1/4 x 31 1/4 x 1 3/8 in. (97.2 x 79.4 x 3.5 cm)



Terry Allen, *MemWars* (film still), 2016, three channel video, edition of 3, run time: 1:22:28, dimensions variable

L.A. Louver is pleased to present the singular Terry Allen for the fifth edition of Frieze Los Angeles in a survey of the artist's wildly multifarious, polymathic body of work. Allen's oeuvre sprawls across artistic modes ranging from visual art to performance to songwriting and beyond, masterfully wielding whichever medium – drawing, sculpture, installation, album, poetry, print, video – he so desires. Continually shapeshifting and proliferating, Allen's work eludes any distillation, echoing the sensorial, emotional, and narrative complexities of real life.

Born in 1946 and raised in Lubbock, Texas, Allen's expansive creative output is saturated and inspired by his observations and experiences in the American West. Infused with a Southern Gothic aesthetic reminiscent of figures such as Jorge Luis Borges, Antonin Artaud, William Faulkner, Cormac McCarthy, and Tim O'Brien, Allen's work displays consistent rumination on transitional spaces and borderlands, the spirit and lawlessness, and haunted tales from these lands. Frustrating any sense of linear narrative, Allen's work brings together elements of his life, phantastic and morphing characters, and landscapes existing in between fact and fiction. As noted by Marcia Tucker, Allen's stories are told to "throw everything into question rather than to clarify what is 'real.'"

Allen's parabolical approach of exposing realities through fiction emerged early in his career, evidenced by the works of his 1969 series *Cowboy and the Stranger*. The images, detailed and hallucinatory, forge a space of both humor and longing, their dreamlike referents at once specific yet lost to memory. Originally accompanied by songs that were complementary to the drawings, rather than representative of, the two taken together open an interstitial space which, according to Allen was "what the piece was about – kind of what happened to you in that middle ground."

The artist's preoccupation with meaning existing *in between* alongside ongoing thematic concerns with love, violence, and liminal encounters and places, is acutely present in *Juarez* (1969 – ongoing). Characterized by Allen as a "haunting," *Juarez* manifests as drawings, poetry, scripts, installations, an acclaimed concept album, among many other forms. A chthonic tale of two couples – Sailor and Alice, Jabo and Chic – who clash at the US/Mexico border, *Juarez* is an infinitely regressing universe of phantasmagorical vignettes, which materialize through Allen's various textual, visual, and musical iterations of the project. Most recently



Terry Allen
Missing Footsteps, 1988
mixed media
22 1/2 x 23 1/2 x 5 1/2 in. (57.2 x 59.7 x 14 cm)



Terry Allen photographed by Ella Anderson, 2019.

Allen developed a new addition in the *Juarez* series: etchings, printed alongside the artist's poetry in a book published by Nazraeli Press in 2022.

That Allen's characters are "atmospheres," culminations of specific conditions, is exemplified in another expansive, multidimensional project entitled *Ring*. *Ring* trails two archetypal figures, *HE* and *SHE*, through a tumult of literal and metaphorical game playing. In this work writing, gambling, and the wrestling ring (a familiar space to Allen, whose father managed a Lubbock auditorium), form the basis of a drama that ensnares the two characters who act out physical and psychological violence on one another brought on by intense passion and devious betrayal.

The "terrible vacancy...the magnitude of which cannot be shown or told or song" described by Dave Hickey writing on Terry Allen's work finds form in *Missing Footsteps* (1988), a mixed media piece of the *Youth in Asia* series through which Allen pays homage to his friend Sinai and grapples with the suffering inflicted by the Vietnam War. In its concern with absence and presence, *Missing Footsteps* mirrors the broader series, which contends – through a build-up of lead sheeting, bamboo, cartography, American pop imagery, and religious symbols – with the indescribable enormity of what is lost to war.

Memory presents itself again Allen's more recent work, *Dugout*. As far-reaching and worldbuilding as any of his other series, *Dugout* mines both personal and national histories and develops lore around his father, a former professional baseball player turned music hall owner turned professional wrestling promoter, and mother, a barrelhouse piano player born in a dugout. A "Supernatural-Jazz-Sport-History-Ghost-Blood-Fiction" expressed through hazy overlapping images, scrawled texts, and fragmentary objects, *Dugout* grasps at personal memories and historic American identities, examining the ways both are invented and deciphered.

Terry Allen and his wife and collaborator Jo Harvey Allen moved from Lubbock to Los Angeles in 1962, and he graduated from the Chouinard Art Institute in 1966. He has received numerous awards and honors including a Guggenheim Fellowship and National Endowment for the Art Fellowships. Allen's work can be found in private and public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., The Museum of Contemporary Art and the L.A. County Museum of Art in Los Angeles, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, among many others.

The leader of Terry Allen & the Panhandle Mystery Band, Allen has played a diversity of venues and festivals, including Wilco's Solid Sound Festival and the Luck Reunion hosted by Willie Nelson. Allen's songs have been recorded by the likes of Guy Clark, Robert Earl Keen, David Byrne, Ricky Nelson, Lucinda Williams, and many other notable musicians.

Terry Allen & the Panhandle Mystery Band will be in concert for two special performances at the Masonic Lodge at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery on Wednesday, February 28 and Thursday, February 29.



Terry Allen

Momo Chronicle IV: Rodez, Volver; Events of the Face, 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)



Terry Allen

Juarez, 1975

mixed media on paper (six sheets)

framed: 34 x 48 1/2 in. (86.4 x 123.2 cm)

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Terry Allen
Angels, c. 1995
edition of 5
bronze
6 x 5 x 6 in. (15.2 x 12.7 x 15.2 cm)

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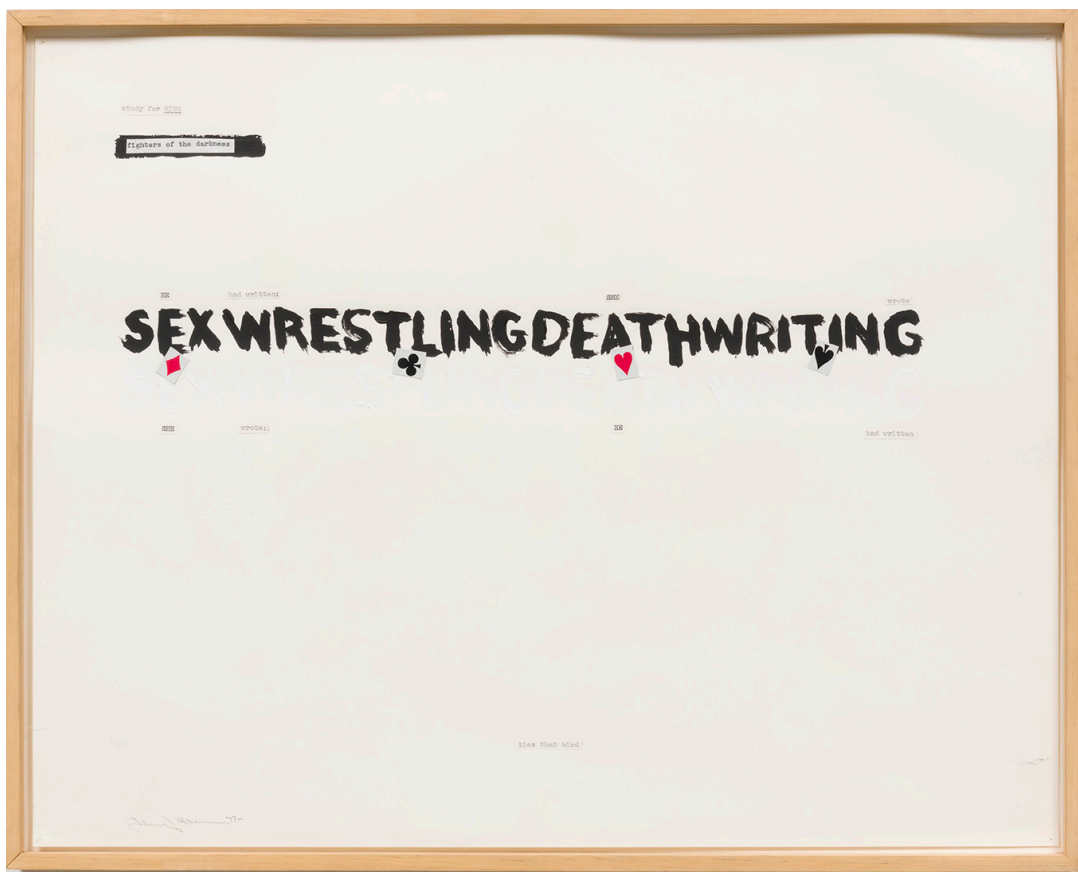
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Terry Allen
The Embrace (Ring), 1979
mixed media installation
overall: 50 x 35 1/2 x 35 1/4 in. (127 x 90.2 x 89.5 cm)

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Terry Allen
Fighters of the darkness (Ring), 1977
mixed media on paper
framed: 20 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (51.4 x 64.1 cm)