

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

**RODNEY GRAHAM**

October 21 – November 22, 2011

Opening Reception, Friday, October 21, 2011, 5 - 7 PM

Donald Young Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Rodney Graham which will feature four new lightboxes at two separate locations in Chicago. With concurrent opening receptions from 5-7 PM on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, *Small Basement Camera Shop circa 1937* and *Betula Pendula 'Fastigiata' (Sous-Chef on Smoke Break)* as well as a book and drawing installation will be on view at the gallery's current location in the Santa Fe Building, 224 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 266. Large-scale works, *The Avid Reader 1949* and *Leaping Hermit*, will be exhibited at the gallery's previous location in the West Loop at 933 W. Washington Blvd.

*Small Basement Camera Shop circa 1937* finds Graham in a snapshot of a camera shop set in the 1930s. Inspired by a found photograph from this period, the artist reconstructed the setting of the antique snapshot extrapolating the finest detail from the small black and white print. The image presents a reflexive view and detailed study of early snapshot photography. The second lightbox featured at the Michigan Avenue location, is *Betula Pendula 'Fastigiata' (Sous Chef on Smoke Break)*. Here we see the artist smoking in chef's whites leaning against a large Birch tree. The title refers to both the Latin genus of the tree and a spare moment of respite for the under-chef.

Two monumental triptychs are on view in the West Loop gallery. *The Avid Reader 1949* is an imagined scene of a man lost in the newsprint lining the windows of a shuttered Woolworth's department store. Set in 1949, the image materialized from an event witnessed by Graham on the streets of Vancouver. A closer look reveals the compulsive reader scanning the news from 1945. In this work, Graham creates an image of two pasts, that of the reader and that of the material he encounters from four years earlier.

With *Leaping Hermit*, the artist re-created a three-part vision of a spritely hermit and his mystical surroundings. The idea stems from a found stereoscopic image of a famous hermit who lived near Nantucket in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the so-called hermit of Quidnet. *Leaping Hermit* is Graham's ethereal depiction of a 20<sup>th</sup> Century version of this character, described by the artist as, "an old hippie who has renounced the world and retreated into the environs of his own somewhat decrepit garden." In the midst of an exuberant leap, the hermit is performing for a pair of youths enchanted and dubious of the spectacle before them.



Internationally recognized for rigorously intellectual art, Graham's practice ranges from photography, film, video and music to sculpture, painting and books. Graham often examines social and philosophical systems of thought, underlying an historical context, through which a complex narrative incorporates cultural references and visual puns.

Rodney Graham was born in Vancouver in 1949 and has exhibited internationally since the 1970s including numerous touring survey exhibitions in Europe and North America, most recently in a 2010 showing at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland; Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany. He has participated in landmark exhibitions, representing Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1997, and exhibiting at documenta IX in 1992 and at Sculpture Project Muenster in 1987. His work is part of major collections from international institutions including The Art Institute of Chicago, Tate Gallery, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The reception is free and open to the public. Gallery hours at the Michigan Avenue location are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm and Saturday, 11:00 am to 5:30 pm. For the duration of the exhibition the West Loop gallery space will be open Wednesday - Saturday from 2-6 PM and by appointment. If you would like more information please contact Emily Letourneau or Robyn Farrell at 312.322.3600 or at [gallery@donaldyoung.com](mailto:gallery@donaldyoung.com).