

On Rotation: Will Brown Selects
INHERENT VICE: THIS IS NOT A BRUCE CONNER EXHIBITION
January 18–April 27, 2014

This exhibition, guest curated by San Francisco-based collective Will Brown, is a show of work inspired by the late Bruce Conner and his many pseudonyms that playfully investigates the artist's mischievous and mysterious life. The individual works on display are recreations and reinterpretations of objects and scenarios found in letters of correspondence between Conner and Rene di Rosa. By reenacting these situations, this exhibition hopes to give the viewer a new look into the history of this fascinating and complicated artist.

An inherent vice is a latent defect (or the very nature) of a good or property which of itself is the cause of (or contributes to) its deterioration, damage, or devolution.

In the years since Bruce Conner's death in 2008, the enigmatic Bay Area artist's identity and mythology continue to evolve. With countless works intentionally unsigned, dozens of assemblages either lost or decayed due to the nature of their unstable materials, and production help from a number of alter egos, Conner's oeuvre represents a formidable challenge for both art historians and conservationists. One can only assume that the skilled prankster himself—a man who twice declared his own death in the press—intentionally orchestrated this inherent vice.

Rather than attempt to clarify a cloudy history, Will Brown works with previous Bruce Conner collaborators Anon, Anonymous, Anonymouse, Justin Kase, Erni Burden, Ernest E. Burden, Gene Buttman, Emily Feather, and Dennis Hopper to produce a fluctuating exhibition of artifacts and artworks related to and inspired by the legendary artist. Several items drawn from the di Rosa collection and archives serve as starting points for an investigation of identity, authorship, remembrance, and mirroring.

On Rotation: Will Brown Selects is inspired by di Rosa's diverse permanent collection and archives. This exhibition is supported by donors to the Fresh Art Fund. Additional support is provided by the di Rosa Collectors Council and our members.

Note: A related exhibition will open at Will Brown's storefront gallery space (3041 24th Street, San Francisco) in February. Items will be added, subtracted, and modified freely by and between the two venues over the course of their run.

About Will Brown

Will Brown is a collaborative project based in a storefront space in San Francisco's Mission District. Their main objective is to manipulate the structures of exhibition-making as a critical practice. Will Brown received an Alternative Exposure Award from Southern Exposure in 2012 and in 2013 was an artist-in-residence at Headlands Center for the Arts in Marin, California. They have a forthcoming MATRIX exhibition at the Berkeley Art Museum in 2015. Will Brown is Lindsey White, Jordan Stein, and David Kasprzak.

About the objects on view (from left to right, clockwise around the gallery space):

1. Will Brown, *I AM/I AM NOT BUTTONS*, 2014

In 1965 Conner made a series of buttons that read I AM BRUCE CONNER and I AM NOT BRUCE CONNER to be handed out at a gym that shared his name.

2. Erni Burden, *Bomb*, 1960

This photograph documenting an early Conner assemblage, *Bomb* (no longer extant), is credited to a photographer named Erni Burden. There was a discrepancy about whether Erni Burden existed or if he was yet another pseudonym of Conner's.

3. Email documentation, 2011

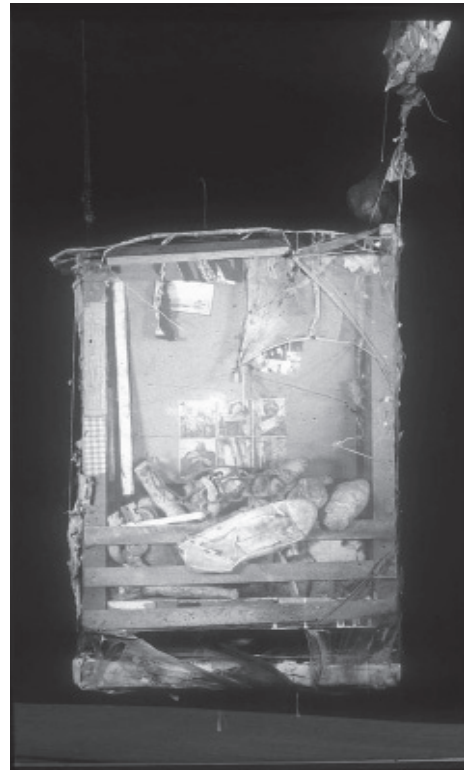
This enlarged and censored email correspondence is taken directly from the Bruce Conner artist file in the di Rosa archives and addresses the discrepancy between Burden and Conner.

4. Will Brown, *Hats*, 2014

Unable to locate the original hat mentioned in Conner's letter to di Rosa (see framed correspondence to the left of the hat installation), Will Brown collected every other BC hat available.

5. George Herms, *Untitled (R)*, 1990

This assemblage, made of old shoes tacked to a plywood backing in the shape of the letter "R," existed on the outside of Conner's house for many years, until it had weathered to his liking. See framed correspondence from Conner to di Rosa for more information regarding the provenance of this object.



Erni Burden, *BOMB*, 1960
Gelatin silver print, 32.125 x 18.125 in.
di Rosa collection, Napa