

Bruce Conner's Physical Services: A Panel Discussion

Moderated by Patricia Maloney, Director of *Art Practical* | *Daily Serving*

Saturday, January 18, 2014

5–6 pm

di Rosa Gatehouse Gallery

What I want to do is change. —Bruce Conner

Bruce Conner's *Physical Services* includes several of the artist's collaborators from key periods of his practice: Anonymouse, Ernest E. Burden, Emily Feather, Tom Garver, and Dennis Hopper. The conversation, moderated by *Art Practical* and *Daily Serving's* director, Patricia Maloney, will focus on the work they produced with Conner and the significance of its attribution for this artist, who was preoccupied with and refuted authorship throughout his career.

Collaboration, which can function as a type of masquerade, offered the artist a blank slate that would enable and fulfill his desire for mutability of style and in media. The title derives from Connor's 1965 gesture, in which he demanded that the San Francisco gym Bruce Conner's *Physical Services* remove their sign, claiming that he was the real Bruce Conner. After the owner refused, Conner returned to the gym with hundreds of buttons emblazoned with the words "I am not Bruce Conner." The artist wore the only button that read, "I am Bruce Conner."

That same year, Conner, who once claimed that one's name "is the emblem that you have the least control over," went so far as to retire his own and subsequently refused to sign innumerable works. In 1998, he declared himself to be an Anonymous Artist who denied authorship in adherence to a twelve-step program for anonymous artists.

Fortunately, for art historians attempting to assess the extent of his oeuvre, Conner's collaborations provide vital markers and insight into his varied production. In keeping with Conner's desire to thwart preconceptions of what his work should or could be, sole attribution for these works, which range from photography to inkblot drawings, is given to his colluders. Our conversation will explore their distinct modes of production, their need to get inside Conner's head, and the sensibilities of the artist who ties these talented individuals together.

This panel discussion is presented in conjunction with INHERENT VICE: THIS IS NOT A BRUCE CONNER EXHIBITION, curated by Will Brown as part of the On Rotation series of exhibitions. This is the first in a series of public programs produced in conjunction with Art Practical's yearlong residency at di Rosa.