

# RICHARD SALTOUN

## Victor Burgin: On Paper

Exhibition dates: 31 October – 6 December 2013

*Richard Saltoun Gallery announces an exhibition of works by pioneering conceptual artist Victor Burgin (b. 1941). Encompassing his paper-based works from the late-60s to date, the exhibition will focus on his radical intervention into mainstream media through the interplay of text and image.*

Victor Burgin first came to prominence in the late 1960s as an originator of Conceptual Art, when his work appeared in such key exhibitions as *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) at the ICA London, and *Information* (1970) at MoMA, New York. He has since remained one of the most consistently influential artists and art theorists of his generation.

The exhibition features some key works from the 70s and 80s that deconstruct photographic images in relation to their juxtaposed texts, such as *Framed* (1977, from the series *US 77*), which subverts a Marlboro cigarette campaign, and *Possession* (1976), a series of 500 posters installed throughout the city of Newcastle upon Tyne showing a man and woman embracing next to the statement 'What does possession mean to you? / 7% of our population own 84% of our wealth'.

Drawing on the conventions and rhetoric of mass media imagery, Burgin began to produce allegorical works with photographs and text. These works operated both on the printed page (posters, postcards, books, exhibition invitations, magazine interventions) and the gallery wall. In 1986 he wrote:

*My decision to base my work in contemporary cultural theory rather than traditional aesthetics, has resulted in work whose precise 'location' is uncertain, 'between': between gallery and book; between 'visual art' and 'theory'; between 'image' and 'narrative' – 'work' providing work between reader and text.*

In this spirit Burgin has produced a number of publications that defy categorization. *Work and Commentary* (1973) *Between* (1986), *Some Cities* (1996), *Venise* (1997), *Voyage to Italy* (2006) and *Components of a Practice* (2008) are not catalogues, nor monographs, nor "artist's books", nor "theory" books narrowly defined. Their hybrid form reflects Burgin's hybrid thought and work.

In addition Burgin has produced a number of books that anthologize his influential essays and interviews: *Two Essays on Photography and Semiotics* (1976), *Thinking Photography* (1982), *The End of Art Theory* (1986), *In/Different Spaces. Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (1996), *The Remembered Film* (2004), *Parallel Texts. Interviews and Interventions about Art* (2011)

The exhibition at Richard Saltoun Gallery will be the artist's first solo exhibition at a private gallery in London since 1986. It will be also displayed in tandem with the major solo exhibition *Victor Burgin – A Sense of Place* at Ambika P3, University of Westminster, London.

### Biography:

**Victor BURGIN** (b. 1941, Sheffield). A student of painting at the Royal College of Art, London, from 1962 to 1965, Burgin then studied Philosophy and Fine Art at Yale University School of Art and Architecture until

1967. Upon returning to the UK, he was introduced to Roland Barthes' seminal text *Elements of Semiology*, which led to his expanding interest in text, language and semiotic theory. Burgin first came to prominence with his inclusion in Harald Szeemann's seminal exhibition *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (ICA, London 1969), where he exhibited *Photopath* (1967), photographs of the floor on which the work was to be installed, exactly matching the scale of the floor itself.

Burgin is Professor Emeritus of History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz and he is Emeritus Millard Chair of Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Travaux 1970-1984*, at Centre Régional de la Photographie Nord Pas-de- Calais, Douchy- les-Mines, France (2009) and *La Cinquième Promenade et Autres Oeuvres*, at MAMCO Musée d'art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2008). A major retrospective is planned for 2014 at Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Germany.

**Curator's Biography:**

David Company is a writer, curator, photographer and teacher. He has taught at the Winchester School of Art; the Surrey Institute of Art & Design; and is a Reader in Photography at the University of Westminster, London.

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**Visitor Information**

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**Gallery Hours:** Monday to Friday 10:00 am - 6:00 pm or by appointment

**[Nearest tube: Oxford Circus and Great Portland Street.](#)**

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