

VENUS

MANHATTAN

Gang Bust: William N. Copley & BFBC, Inc.

April 11 - June 22, 2013

Opening: Wednesday, April 11th, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Confiserie CPLY

June 1 - 15, 2013

Open: Monday through Saturday, 9:00 am - 1:00 am

Venus Over Manhattan

980 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10075

Confiserie Schiesser

Markplatz 19

Basel, Switzerland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



(New York, NY) – New York-born painter, writer, gallerist, collector, publisher and art entrepreneur **William N. Copley** (1919-1996) began his career in the arts as a dealer of Surrealist and Dada titans Rene Magritte, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Joseph Cornell and Yves Tanguy. Such was the impact of their work upon the imagination of this American eccentric – who dubbed himself CPLY – that he began to paint on his own in the 1950s after shuttering his Los Angeles gallery. Mixing eroticism, symbolism, whimsy and darkness, CPLY earned the enthusiastic encouragement of the very artists whose works his business had represented. By the early 1970s, he developed a signature style in which everyday objects or (more often and now legendarily) sexually explicit couplings were presented against lushly patterned backgrounds. In these paintings, Copley emerges as a

mediator between European postwar art and American Pop Art, and a bemused if troubled guide through the charged sexual, psychological and emotional terra incognita he once referred to as “the tragedy of man and woman.”

In tribute to this 20th century original, Venus Over Manhattan gallery will devote its Spring 2013 program to William Copley with two presentations – **Gang Bust**, an exhibition in New York City, and **Confiserie CPLY**, a site-specific art and candy project at the historic Confiserie Schiesser chocolate shop in Basel, Switzerland.

IN NEW YORK

Beginning April 11th, the gallery’s New York City space at 980 Madison Avenue will present **Gang Bust**. Curated by artist **Bjarne Melgaard’s Big Fat Black Cock, Inc. (BFBC, Inc.)**, this exhibition centers upon a selection of important CPLY paintings spanning the artist’s career from the 1950s through the 1980s. Among these are key examples from two of CPLY’s most celebrated series – the satirical, Pop-influenced “Nouns” paintings of singular everyday objects set against boldly patterned backgrounds, and the infamous “X-Rated” series from the 1970s depicting sexually explicit couplings.

CPLY’s paintings will be exhibited alongside a variety of new works, including paintings and furniture, created by BFBC, Inc., in response to William Copley’s art, politics and life. Whereas CPLY’s own paintings depict Caucasian figures almost exclusively, BFBC, Inc., has repainted his predecessor’s sexual partners in CPLY’s signature naïve style but as African-Americans. Connecting CPLY’s work to the larger context of his era, BFBC, Inc., also will present furniture inspired by the work of Allen Jones, the British Pop sculptor (b. 1937) whose emergence coincided with Copley’s own. For **Gang Bust**, BFBC, Inc., has made objects that borrow from a series of erotic sculptures Jones made in the late 1960s and early 70s, known for their focus on bondage, fetishism and

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the transformation of women into human furniture.

By curating CPLY's work and offering new interpretations of it, BFBC, Inc. also invites fresh associations that reach beyond the accepted narratives of CPLY's career and suggest a kinship of practice across time. Melgaard and CPLY are linked by their emphasis upon collaborations with other artists and their rejection of the status quo as it regards politics, sexuality, morality, good taste, good citizenship and the accepted values of the art world.

Gang Bust will remain on view at Venus Over Manhattan through June 1st.

IN BASEL

From June 1st through June 15th, and in conjunction with the annual Art Basel fair in Switzerland, Venus will present the second part of its homage to William Copley with **Confiserie CPLY**. This project is a collaboration between the gallery and the historic Confiserie Schiesser, the oldest café and chocolate shop in Basel, Switzerland, founded in 1870 and renowned across Europe for its approach to candy making as fine art.

For two weeks, the Confiserie will offer customers to its street level shop a special limited edition product: hand made chocolates decorated in relief with figures from CPLY's painting *Villa Rosa* (1959). In the tea salon located on the second of third levels of its landmark building across from the Drei König Hotel (Grand Hotel Les Trois Rois), Confiserie Schiesser also will serve kirsch with CPLY chocolates alongside its regular menu items, in spaces decorated with custom-made CPLY wallpaper derived from the wallpaper pattern key a CPLY canvas. In these rooms Venus will present eight major paintings by the artist.

Confiserie CPLY coincides with the 40th anniversary of Art Basel's first special single-country exhibitions in 1973 – a show devoted to American art.

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN was founded by Adam Lindemann in 2012 as a curatorial platform for exhibitions and projects that expand upon the conventional gallery format through collaborations with artists, gallerists, collectors, curators, and institutions. The gallery is located at 980 Madison Avenue, between 76th and 77th Streets, on the 3rd floor, and is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm.

For further information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at info@venusovermanhattan.com

For all press inquiries related to the exhibition, please email press@venusovermanhattan.com