



LEE QUINONES

MAY 2 - JUNE 7, 2015

**291 GRAND STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10002**

OPENING RECEPTION: MAY 2, 6-8PM

Nicole Klagsbrun is pleased to announce Lee Quinones' pop-up solo exhibition of early, never seen before drawings presented alongside a range of new works, which collectively span 1975 to the present and establish the dynamic lineage of his art over the years. The exhibition, which centers on the dichotomy of the old and new as well as turbulence and calm, also highlights the literal marks of "street art." These elements provide the link to Quinones' current studio practice as well as to the debut of a site-specific wall piece at the gallery that is inspired by the rich history established by his works on paper.

Building on a prolific career that extends from his time as a legendary street artist in the 1970s and 1980s into a rich oeuvre established over the past two decades, this exhibition sheds light on Quinones' first love: drawing. In the process, this presentation underscores the significance the artist has placed on mark-making, the socio-political specificity of site or location, and the ideas of history, memory and nostalgia which are an ongoing and integral part of his art.

Quinones' early drawings encapsulate the history of 1970s New York City, an era marked by a sense of urgency particularly around economic and social issues, as well as the national concerns of the Cold War and volatile U.S. economy. The artist describes this period as "tumultuous and dark, filled with a sense of radical change." And these sentiments are embodied in his original, colorful and multi-textured work studies for whole subway cars including, "Born Again" (1975), as well as "Jesus Christ: Superstar" (1977) which convey the sense of urgency, reflection and call to action so pertinent to the time.

In his more recent works, Quinones establishes a sense of calm and peace. They display his meditation on his Nuyorican and family history and Latin American identity, and are grounded in self-reflection and introspection. "Golpe de Suerte" (2013) is a collage of his mother's recipe writings that are combined with various papers, plane tickets and vouchers found in her collection of stuff that she compiled over the years. A centerpiece of the exhibition, it is a humble, quiet work that reveals a soft serendipity unfolding into a cathartic existence reflective of Quinones' past.

Quinones' recent "Tags" (2014) harken back to his days on the street of NYC while also reflecting his current studio practice. While his early street art was methodical, clear and had to be well-planned, here Quinones is re-visiting his mark with vivid colors in spray paint, acrylics and markers; experimenting with and reflecting on his process, work and life with a sense of humor, as if to assert that in the end it essential to live joyously.

Lee Quinones was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico in 1960, and raised in New York City's Lower East Side. One of the originators of street art, Lee started painting on New York City's streets and subway cars in the 1970s. Over the next decade he would paint over 100 whole subway cars throughout the MTA system, then shift to a studio-based practice. Lee was instrumental in moving street art above the ground when he created the first handball court mural in 1978. He has had numerous solo shows and exhibited internationally, first at Galleria Medusa in Rome, Italy in 1979. In 1980, Lee had his first New York show at White Columns, ushering in an important era as spray paint made the transition from moving objects to stationary canvas works. His work was included in the critical "Times Square Show" (1980); "Graffiti Art Success for America at Fashion Moda" (1980); the "New York/New Wave" show (1981) at PS1; and, in "Documenta #7" in Kassel, Germany (1983). In the past decade his drawings and paintings have been shown in "East Village USA" at the New Museum of Contemporary Art (2005), "The 'S' Files" at El Museo del Barrio (2010), and "Looking at Music 3.0" at the Museum of Modern Art (2011). He has had solo shows at MoMA PS1, Contemporary Art Center of Cincinnati, the Fun Gallery, Barbara Gladstone, Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Lisson Gallery and Barbara Farber, among others. In 1983 he was featured in Charlie Ahearn's influential film, "Wild Style," which served as a blueprint for the emerging hip hop and street art movements. Lee also appears in Blondie's "Rapture" video, and in "Downtown 81." His work also appears in the Tony Silver and Henry Chalfant 1983 documentary film "Style Wars" and Manfred Kirchheimer's "Stations of the Elevated."

Quinones' paintings are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, the Groninger Museum (Groningen, Netherlands), and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam, Netherlands).

Lee Quinones lives and works in Brooklyn New York.