

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Albertz Benda Opens with the Inaugural Exhibition  
*The Accidental Poet (The Avoidance of Everything)*  
Bill Beckley—1968-1978

On view September 10 – October 3, 2015



*Graphic for Myself as  
Washington, 1969*  
Black and white photograph on  
paperboard 14 x 28 inches  
(35.5 x 71 cm)

I've read that DeKooning was afraid to look at a blank canvas. Sometimes to get started he would look around the room and fix on an object—a stove, a table, a chair, and write the word, chair, for instance, across the canvas so that it wouldn't be blank anymore. At this time there were two groups of abstract expressionists. The other was more structured and probably the forerunners of minimalism and later, conceptualism. I liked the group better, although lately I've removed all the furniture from my studio. I kept the stove, however, and in the evenings when it is cold I sit in front of it to keep warm.



*De Kooning's Stove, 1974*  
Cibachrome and black and white  
photographs 30 x 60 inches (76.2 x  
152.4 cm) Edition of 3

*When I did the piece crossing the Delaware River on foot, dripping paint as I went, the current took me under, and I lost not only the paint but also the camera I was using to document the work. I realized then that all I had left was the story.* – Bill Beckley, 2007

**New York, NY, June 11, 2015** – For its inaugural exhibition, Albertz Benda is pleased to present a solo show of rare, early works by Bill Beckley from 1968-1978, many of which have not been on view in four decades. A fundamental member of the '70s SoHo art community, Beckley's work provides a crucial glimpse into one of the key New York art movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *The Accidental Poet (The Avoidance of Everything)* features materials drawn from Beckley's archives, shuttered since the 1970s, unveiling never before seen performance documentation, watercolors, and studies for his best-known work, among other materials. The exhibition will also feature the artist's conceptual narrative work of typed fictions and framed photographs, previously shown at landmark exhibitions including the Whitney Biennial, Documenta and the Venice Biennale, which have not been on view in the United States since the 1970s. *The Accidental Poet (The Avoidance of Everything)* opens on September 10, 2015 and is on view through October 3, 2015.

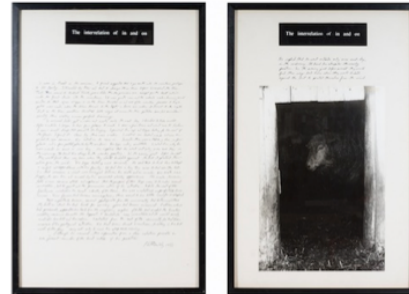
Born in response to the minimalism of Robert Morris, Carl André, and Sol LeWitt (artists who made terse and immensely self-evident objects), Bill Beckley's work represents the next generation and is comprised of many mediums full of shifting meanings. He is part of the highly influential '112 Greene Street' group, made up of artists such as Vito Acconci, Dennis Oppenheim, Suzanne Harris, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Yvonne Rainer. They flooded SoHo, what was then an industrial neighborhood, and used the raw, cavernous spaces to the benefit of new creative processes.

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Bill Beckley's work does not get to the point. Instead, it teases strange and beautiful poetry out of the mundane, orbiting around matters, sometimes nearing a center of gravity only visible to him, and other times soaring to another dimension. His subject matter draws from the parts of existence that cannot be pinned down.

Akin to synesthesia, where modes of sensory experiences are swapped, Beckley's ideas are often described through an unexpected sense. This is evident in works like *Song for a Chin-Up*, performed in 1971 at Holly Solomon loft (98 Greene Street), where the motion of a chin-up was defined through notes sung gradually higher in scale, then swiftly down key. The song will be re-performed, for the first time since the '70s, during the Albertz Benda show. In *Raven Recitations*, 1971, Beckley taught a raven to say "dark", then photographed her reciting the word. The sound is absent; all that is visible is her beak and tongue. These works demonstrate he is much more than a storyteller – he is a visual poet. Like verse, his work invokes all five senses through more than just one medium.



*The Interrelation of In and On, 1973*  
Black and white photographs and ink on  
paperboard  
21 x 31 inches (53 x 79 cm)

The narrative work in the exhibition represents the last of the Cibachrome photograph printing process, now impossible to recreate. Using the last remaining paper supplies available in New York, Beckley reprinted the last editions of many of his influential narrative work in 2014. Cibachrome is a uniquely robust, almost glowing, printing process, which Beckley used for its sensual qualities and almost object-like presence.

Concurrent with *The Accidental Poet (The Avoidance of Everything)*, Beckley's performance work *Turtle Trumpet* from Willoughby Sharp's 'Pier 18' exhibition (1971), will be included in the exhibition *Art on Camera: Photographs by Shunk-Kender 1960-1971*, on view at the Museum of Modern Art from until May 17 - October 4, 2015.

### About Bill Beckley

Bill Beckley was born in Hamburg, Pennsylvania in 1946 and lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA from Temple University, and a BFA from Kutztown State University, PA. He has taught semiotics at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York since 1970.

Throughout the 1970s Beckley's Narrative works were exhibited in New York at the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The International Center for Photography, the Whitney Biennial (1979), and in Europe at Documenta (1976), the Paris Biennale (1973) and the Venice Biennale (1975).

Beckley's work is in the permanent collections of museums worldwide, including: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Tate Modern, London; Daimler Collection, Stuttgart; Sammlung Hoffman, Berlin; and in numerous private collections including the Morton Neumann Family, Jeff Koons, and Sol LeWitt.

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## About Albertz Benda

Opening in Fall 2015, Albertz Benda is a new gallery partnership between Thorsten Albertz and Marc Benda committed to presenting and nurturing a contemporary visual arts program, featuring a distinct roster of emerging and established artists.

Follow Albertz Benda on [Instagram](#) via the hashtag [#AlbertzBenda](#)

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