

Cherry and Martin

Drohojowska-Philp, Hunter. "ART TALK-PST: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken at the Armory", *KCRW.com*, November 3, 2011.



ART TALK



PST: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken at the Armory

THU NOV 3, 2011

Host: Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

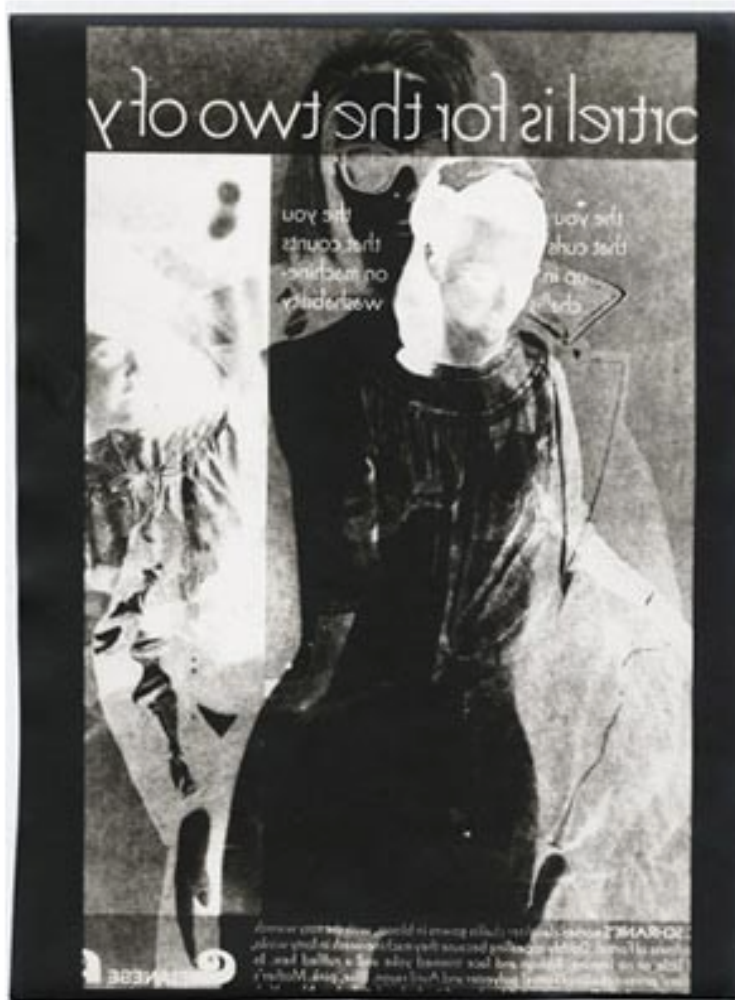
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Experimentation could be considered the leitmotif of any number of exhibitions associated with **Pacific Standard Time**. The adventurous artists of Southern California consistently confronted existing ideas about what constituted a painting, a sculpture or a photograph. Two artists who quite specifically expanded the use of photographic reproduction were Robert Heinecken and Wallace Berman. These artists seemed to exist in quite separate realms until the current show at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena: *Speaking in Tongues*.



Robert Heinecken, (from) Are You Rea (1964-68)
Offset lithographs from a portfolio of 25 Various sizes, in 16 x 20 in frames
Collection of Sam Mellon and Julie Deamer-Mellon, Los Angeles, California

Heinecken, who founded the photography department at UCLA in 1964, had very little interest in the camera or traditional dark room techniques. He was more interested in the ways that the photographic imagery of magazines and television had come to infiltrate every moment of waking life. Originally, he studied printmaking and that process affected his methods. In the most well-known series, *Are You Rea?*, he exposed the front and back of a magazine page as though it were a negative and wound up with a print that conflated advertisements and news, the erotically suggestive and the violent, to emphasize the absurdity of mass media culture. Heinecken, who kept his long hair grown down to the middle of his back, advocated the elimination of all restrictions in terms of what could be represented and specifically concentrated on female nudes and overt sexuality. He projected texts onto nude models that then selected his imagery from porn magazines though the pictures were cropped, flopped, double exposed and presented as negatives, as white imagery on a black background. His influence is most evident in the work of Richard Prince, who appropriates advertising photographs in his art.



*Wallace Berman, Untitled #126 (1964)
Single negative photographic image 6 1/2 x 7 in
Courtesy of the Estate of Wallace Berman and Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles*

Similarly, Wallace Berman was concerned with the implication and use of photographic images. His work, however, was very much inspired by the Beats, poetry and his fascination with the Kabbalah. In fact the show's title refers to glossalalia, an ancient Christian practice of channeling the spiritual forces in speech and relates to Berman's method of incorporating mystical symbols. Five years older than Heinecken, one of the first artists to show at Ferus gallery, Berman was the epitome of cool. His Beverly Glen home was a hang-out for Dennis Hopper, Dean Stockwell and, after Heinecken moved into the neighborhood, he became a regular. Berman regularly produced small hand-printed editions of poetry and pictures called Semina that he sent to friends. Then he began using the forerunner of a copying machine called a Verifax to print the image of a hand holding a transistor radio, drawn from a Sony ad. Berman replaces the radio with a great variety of photographic images, sexy girls, bombs, machinery, nature scenes, as though suggesting that the radio transmissions linked all representation, all existence.

With their lusty subject matter and affection for original methods of producing photographic art, Heinecken and Berman appear closely involved in parallel investigations.

Speaking in Tongues: The Art of Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken
Armory Center for the Arts
Now through January 22, 2012