



RAT BASTARD PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Curated by Anastasia Aukeman

April 27 – June 3, 2017

Book signing: Saturday, April 29, 4-6PM

Susan Inglett Gallery is pleased to present Rat Bastard Protective Association, a group exhibition organized by Dr. Anastasia Aukeman, author of *Welcome to Painterland: Bruce Conner and the Rat Bastard Protective Association* (University of California Press, 2016). Through gallery ephemera and more than 40 works by 10 artists, the exhibition documents the activities and artistic production of the Rat Bastard Protective Association (RBPA), an inflammatory, close-knit community of artists and poets who lived and worked together in a building they dubbed “Painterland” in the Fillmore neighborhood of mid-century San Francisco. The idiosyncratic group included **Wallace Berman, Bob Brnaman, Joan Brown, Bruce Conner, Jean Conner, Jay DeFeo, George Herms, Wally Hedrick, Manuel Neri, and Michael McClure**, among other, less constant members.

Eager to consolidate his inclusion in the artistic community in and around 2322 Fillmore Street, or “Painterland,” when he arrived in San Francisco in September 1957, Bruce Conner placed himself firmly at the center of the cohort by forming the Rat Bastard Protective Association and naming himself its president. Conner derived the name by combining the name of a San Francisco trash collection company, the Scavengers Protective Association, with a slur picked up at the gym. The art practices of these Northern California artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s animated broader social and artistic discussions throughout the United States and carved out an important place for West Coast activities for decades to come.

The Rat Bastard Protective Association exhibition at Susan Inglett Gallery will be the second since 1958, when the group led a parade to the opening of their exhibition at the Spatsa Gallery on Filbert Street in San Francisco. (The first, also curated by Aukeman, was mounted at the Landing in Los Angeles in Fall 2016.) We are grateful for the cooperation of the estates and institutions lending works to the exhibition, including The Conner Family Trust, The Jay DeFeo Foundation, the Estate of Wally Hedrick, and the Stockwell Collection.

Dr. Anastasia Aukeman is an art historian, curator, and professor at Parsons School of Design in New York City.

Stamp created by Bruce Conner, ca. 1957– 58. © Conner Family Trust / Artists Rights Society