

MARC SELWYN FINE ART

Jeff Keen
September 25 – November 10, 2018



Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to announce the gallery's first solo show with British artist and filmmaker, Jeff Keen (1923-2012). The exhibition will include works on paper from the late 1940's to the 1970's alongside selected film installations. The opening on September 25th will include a screening at WME in Beverly Hills followed by a dinner reception at the gallery. RSVP is required for this event.

A poet, avant-garde artist and pioneering filmmaker, Keen combined diverse media and genres to forge his singular, subversive and highly influential oeuvre. An important contributor to the countercultural and "happenings" scenes in Britain and New York, Keen's influences included Surrealism, Picasso, Dubuffet and the spirit of Andy Warhol. By turns beautiful and poetic, raw and apocalyptic, Keen's films used experimental techniques to fuse live action and animation – a combination of collage, drawings, found footage, hand-altered film stock and layered projections.

"We are all collage artists today, switching from one channel
to another, re-editing as we go." -Jeff Keen

Keen's cinematic innovations and influences also found their way into Keen's boundary pushing drawings, and frequently neglected work in other media. Keen's books of watercolor drawings, which served as scenography for the artist's films, are themselves significant expressions of his complex and idiosyncratic creative philosophy. As noted by film and video artist Steve Hawley in 1986, "Keen's notebooks occupy an ambiguous status in relation to his films. They are not preparatory sketches or storyboards but rather like Surrealist 'films on paper.'" Keen himself once stated that the sets "though complete in themselves...work playful variations around the themes and images of the film." Sometimes together in sequence, other times standing alone, their form powerfully suggests the 'comic strip of life' that Keen sought to conjure in all his work. Their resonant imagery evokes the same manic universe of creation and violent destruction through which Keen described the frenetic world of post-war Western society.

M A R C S E L W Y N F I N E A R T

Jeff Keen (British, 1923-2012) studied commercial art briefly before being drafted into the National Service during WWII. After the war, he moved to Brighton where he lived and worked until his death. Keen's work has recently been the subject of two retrospectives: *Shoot the Wrx, Artist and Filmmaker Jeff Keen* at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and *Gazwrx: The Films of Jeff Keen* at BFI, Southbank, London. A major installation, *Gazapocalypse – Return to the Golden Age*, took place at the Tanks at Tate Modern in September 2012. Selected exhibitions, screenings and performances include those at the Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway; Tate Britain; Fabrica, Brighton; Serpentine Gallery, London and the London Film Festival, Galerie du Centre, Paris, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, among others.