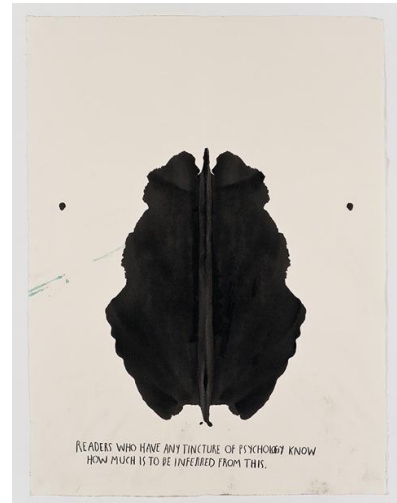


RAYMOND PETTIBON

03 October – 17 November 2012
69 South Audley St London W1

Sadie Coles HQ's fifth exhibition with American artist Raymond Pettibon comprises an extensive series of recent drawings which manifest his art at its most eclectic.

Densely hung across the walls, the drawings involve Pettibon's characteristic integration of disparate imagery and fragments of handwritten text lifted and adapted from myriad sources. His style shifts fitfully within and between the works, ranging from graphic line drawing in charcoal (for instance, a rapidly crosshatched Bible) which invokes his early cartoons, to expressionistic and painterly forms executed in combinations of gouache, acrylic and crayon.



Pettibon's chaotic agglomerative method is equivalent to the 'cut up' technique adopted by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs in their book *The Third Mind* (1977). In an extension of this methodology, certain of Pettibon's recent works literally employ collage. In *No Title (Re-up periscope)*, pornographic excerpts from different drawings mass together into a bustling orgy, while a scribbled cartoon of a gun being discharged provides a comic superscript.

Pettibon's quotations, aphorisms and fragments of dialogue – free-floating and suspended from context – vary between bizarre interpolations and apposite subscripts. The result is a continual lurch in mood – from the sensationalist to the mundane to the absurdist to the poetically ambivalent. A blotted Rorschach design is given the wry tagline "Readers who have any tincture of psychology know how much is to be inferred from this". In *No Title (Be content at)*, John Ruskin's instructions on drawing ("Be content at present if you find your hand gaining command over the curves") accompany an image of a naked woman holding her breasts – perhaps a parodic affront to Ruskin's supposed sexual reticence.

Religious and art-historical tropes are paraphrased and bastardised in the same way as quotations and words ("Tryck Whutuyp" written beside Christ on the cross, is an invented variant of "whattup" or "whassup"). Christ and skulls appear variously; and a bowl of fruit implies an improvised still life. Many of the works also revisit themes and figures which have recurred throughout Pettibon's career. Baseball players appear in works such as *No Title (A hop, skiyp,)*, showing a lumbering figure bowling, or in the form of a randomly inserted mugshot of Johnny Broaca. As in much of Pettibon's art, the sordid underbelly of American life is glimpsed: *No Title (Do I bother)* pictures a seedy nightclub, the gobbets of text conveying the sexual tension between a singer and dancer.

Pettibon's works muse continually on the power dynamic between image and text – the capacity for one to inflect or undermine the other. Certain drawings veer into an autobiographical and self-reflexive mode: *No Title (Of myself what)* portrays Pettibon in a sports jacket with the epithet "Team Comes First" (possibly a fictional self-image). The work *No Title (Missing accomplices. They)* plays on its own fragmentariness through a jumble of sound bites. These reflect the slippery interflow of voices – public pronouncements, internal soliloquies, media jargon, clichés, street slang and poetry – defining Pettibon's art.

Raymond Pettibon was born in 1957 in Tuscon, Arizona, and studied at UCLA in Los Angeles. As a young graduate he worked as a maths teacher before embarking on an artistic career, designing album covers for Black Flag and becoming associated with the Los Angeles Punk scene. In recent years Pettibon has numerous major solo shows including *Whuytuyp*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland (2012); 'v-boom', Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, Germany (2007); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2006); and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2005). Retrospectives of his work have been held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. In 2010 Pettibon received the prestigious Oskar Kokoschka prize. Raymond Pettibon lives and works in Los Angeles.

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Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 10 – 6pm