

ARTIST PROFILE

DECLARATION
APRIL 21st –
SEPTEMBER 9th

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Installation view, *Public Sculpture (Edits)*. Institute for Contemporary Art, Richmond, Virginia, 2018. Photo: Terry Brown

GEOF OPPENHEIMER

Geof Oppenheimer presents two works in conversation with each other. Oppenheimer intends *Public Sculptures (Edits)*, to be read in complex, perhaps even contradictory ways. They might be perceived as inert tools or as active beings ready to speak, perform, or protest. They stand adjacent to each other, but are they individuals or members of a public? Convivial, neutral, or ominous? Powerful, or vulnerable, or both? Their almost humanoid quality is amplified by the addition of baseball caps, without text or logo to link them to any specific team, corporation, or political movement. Oppenheimer's choice to cast from terracotta—a medium that has long been used to make buildings, vessels, and figurative sculpture—links contemporary questions to ancient human experience.

The Therapy of Groups asks how do individuals navigate physical, emotional, and social tensions when they come together to form groups? Here, against a warmly lit backdrop, arms and hands reach from out of frame. Each performs specific but enigmatic gestures: it is unclear what relation each body has to the others and what new forms of civic or interpersonal energy might emerge from these temporary collectives. Note that the photographs are held in place against the perforated and painted steel support by customized magnets that interrupt and add new elements to each image.

ON VIEW

Public Sculptures (Edits), 2009 / 2018

Cast ceramic, steel, and mixed media

Courtesy of the artist

The Therapy of Groups, 2018

2 panels: Perforated steel, pigment prints on paper and neodymium magnets

Courtesy of the artist

LOCATION

Gallery 1

Beverly Reynolds Gallery



Public Sculpture (Edits), 2009-10. Photo courtesy of the artist

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INTERVIEW

For me, art is a place where values and meaning come into productive conflict—not resolution. At its best, it does not produce solutions but provides a space for a reorganization of vision. –Geof Oppenheimer

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ARE THERE DETAILS ABOUT THE WORK YOU'RE SHOWING IN *DECLARATION* THAT YOU'D ESPECIALLY LIKE AUDIENCES TO PAY ATTENTION TO?

The Therapy of Groups asks questions concerning the conditionality of social relations. It is a highly abstracted representation of the ways in which people support, attack, and console one another. These verbs (as we all know) are always changing, never stable and often times one person can play more than one of these rolls. The project was made with dancers from the Hubbard Street Dance Company. A very good ensemble here in Chicago. In my studio I gave them affective prompts; “you are the antagonist, you the victim” and so forth and together we designed the choreography that the photographs hold. These images are held conditionally with magnets upon metal screens. They are held as you see but have the ability to change in the future just as they have likely than held differently in the past. Who is the leader, what is a speaker and who are the members of a public?



Above: Public Sculpture (Edirs), Detail, 2018, Institute for Contemporary Art, Richmond, Virginia, 2018. Photo: Terry Brown.

Below: Installation view, *The Therapy of Groups*, Institute for Contemporary Art, Richmond, Virginia, 2018. Photo: Terry Brown



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BIOGRAPHY



The Therapy of Groups, detail. Image courtesy of the artist

Born 1973, Washington, D.C; Lives in Chicago, Illinois

Geof Oppenheimer is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice takes up questions of civic value, the ways in which political and social structures are encoded in images and objects, and how meaning is formed in the modern world. Oppenheimer was trained as a sculptor but produces work across a multitude of mediums, including stage set video productions and photography.

Oppenheimer received his BFA from Maryland Institute, College of Art and an MFA from the University of California in Berkeley. Select solo exhibitions: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art in Evanston, Illinois (2015); *The Project*, New York (2005); and *MC*, Los Angeles, California (2004). Select group exhibitions: Kadist Art Foundation in Paris (2015); Logan Center for the Arts in Chicago, Illinois (2014); 4th Athens Biennial (2013), The Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Maryland (2011), Aspen Museum of Art (2010); and Manchester Metropolitan University, UK (2001). Collections include: The Block Museum of Art, Illinois. Select awards: Eisner Award (2001), Grand Mariner Foundation Working Grant (2000), Atlantic Center for the Arts Residency with Charles Ray (2001), and Phillips Electronics Traveling Grant (1994). Geof Oppenheimer is currently an Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago and lives and works in Chicago, Illinois.

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