

Raymond Pettibon and Yoshua Okon

ARMORY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

145 N. Raymond Ave.

May 23–August 30

The centerpiece of Raymond Pettibon and Yoshua Okon's exhibition mines the mythic history of Los Angeles's cultural past. Flanked on both sides by individual works by each artist, *Hipnostasis*, 2009, is a jointly produced six-channel video installation that provides an intimate glimpse into the interior lives of six anonymous beach bums as they silently consume steaks on the rocks of Venice Beach at daybreak. Pettibon and Okon's practices merge here for the first time to form a quiet document of a bygone era of the Venice Beach vanguard. The portraits that make up *Hipnostasis* focus on individual hippies who have formed communities and have remained in the area despite its transformation into an upscale neighborhood and popular tourist destination. Persisting as a remnant of the city's unofficial history, the decaying bohemian icon enters into Pettibon and Okon's project as the subcultural ideal, as the anachronistic embodiment of political nonconformity to the point of primitivism. Interspersed around the six flat-screen monitors, Pettibon's scrawled textual fragments refer further to the characters and histories that have shaped the myth of the itinerant artist as the sordid alternative to the city's lighter and sunnier past. Names and places like SWAMI X and SYNANON emerge from the hurried writing to form an unofficial history of the currents that flow along the region's underside. Individual and collective figures of the revolutionary and the exotic other have separately occupied the attention of Pettibon and Okon throughout much of their careers, and their collaborative project represents the manifestation of these archetypes in the form of the Venice Beach hippie as a pervasive marker of cultural and historical disruption.

— Aram Moshayedi

ArtForum "Critics Picks"

Jun. 2009



Raymond Pettibon and Yoshua Okon, *Hipnostasis*, 2009, six LCD monitors and three drywall panels, 8 x 12". Installation view.