BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Immediate Release
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Bridgette Mayer Gallery
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Bridgette Mayer Gallery Presents:
***Beautiful Freak,* a solo exhibition by Ray Beldner**
February 4– March 22, 2025
Artist Reception & Happy Hour: Friday, February 7th, 5:00 – 7:30pm
In the Vault: Allen Bentley

Philadelphia, PA – January 16, 2025. Bridgette Mayer Gallery is thrilled to announce *Beautiful Freak*, an exhibition by gallery artist Ray Beldner and his first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition will feature new and recent sculptural collages which are made on laser-cut wood forms, inhabiting the space between two and three dimensions. In addition, the Vault will feature charcoal drawings by Allen Bentley, from his beloved dancer series, titled: *To Dance All Night. Beautiful Freak* and *To Dance All Night* will be on view from Tuesday, February 4 to Saturday, March 22 at Bridgette Mayer Gallery. On Friday, February 7th, there will be an artist reception & happy hour from 5:00 – 7:30pm at the gallery.

Beldner takes fragmented images torn from art history books, auction catalogs, and art magazines to create his sculptural collages. Inspired by modernist sculptors like Henry Moore and Jean Arp, the works challenge traditional notions of collage as it is not inherently clear that the viewer is looking at paper. The work possesses a distinct sculptural quality that plays with and obscures the figure-ground relationships. Recently Beldner has transitioned from a more conceptual driven process to a more intuitive approach, stating:

I now let materials and forms guide the work. My small layered constructions have grown into large-scale assemblages and freestanding sculptures, driven by an organic exploration of form rather than predetermined concepts.

By deconstructing and reimagining art historical imagery, these pieces create a dialogue with the past while charting new territory. The process is simultaneously destructive and generative— tearing apart art books to create entirely new forms that both honor and transform the canon.

About Ray Beldner:
Ray Beldner is a mixed media artist whose work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and can be found in many public and private collections including the National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C., the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Oakland Museum of California, the San Jose Museum of Art, the

di Rosa Preserve in Napa, California, the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, and the Federal Reserve Board, Washington D.C., among others. The work is in several corporate collections as well: Saks Fifth Ave, Bain Capital, McKesson Corporation, President Hotel, NY, the Royal Sonestra Chicago Riverfront, and the Candler Hotel in Atlanta.

Born in San Francisco, Beldner received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MFA from Mills College in Oakland, California. He has received numerous awards and fellowships including a California Arts Council Fellowship in New Genres, a Creative Work Fund Grant from the Haas Foundations, and a Potrero Nuevo environmental art grant. He has taught sculpture and interdisciplinary studies at the San Francisco Art Institute and the California College of the Arts, University of California, Berkeley and Santa Cruz.

His work has been reviewed in publications including Art in America, Art on Paper, Wired, the Boston Globe, the Los Angeles Times, the Village Voice, the International Herald Tribune and the New York Times. Recent catalogues with his work include: Inventing Marcel Duchamp: The Dynamics of Portraiture, MIT Press, 2009; Art of Engagement: Visual Politics in California and Beyond, University of California Press, 2006; Imaginary Economics: Contemporary Artists and the World of Big Money, NAi Publishers, 2005.

In the Vault:

Featured in the Gallery's Vault space, will be five charcoal drawings by gallery artist Allen Bentley of his dancer series. Inspired by energy, passion, and rhythm, Bentley has modeled his paintings off the dancers in motion, capturing elegance and grace. His exploration of motion runs throughout his career. Even his still-lifes in college seemed to shift in place. Using the vehicle of bustling dancers, swimming couples, and now vintage cars made of quick, energetic touches he discusses the dynamic nature of our quest for connection in our lives. Pushing, pulling, flirting, chasing: these are the moments Bentley explores through a flurry of gestural marks.

He received his Masters of Fine Art from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000 and his Bachelors of Fine Art from Western Carolina University in 1996. He has exhibited across the country, with solo exhibitions in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, and San Diego. Allen Bentley is represented in Philadelphia by Bridgette Mayer Gallery. He has shown in the Philadelphia International Airport and in Artworks at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 2009, Bentley had his first solo museum show at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts in Wilmington, DE.

He teaches Figure Drawing and Drawing at Montgomery College in Rockville, MD and serves as chair of the Christopher Lyon Scholarship selection committee at the University of Pennsylvania.

Bentley lives in Clarksburg, MD with his wife and children.

Exhibition information: *Beautiful Freak* and *To Dance All Night* will be on view from Tuesday, February 4 to Saturday, March 22, 2025 at Bridgette Mayer Gallery. On Friday, February 7, Bridgette Mayer Gallery will host an Artist Reception & Happy Hour from 5:00 to 7:30pm.

Gallery information: Bridgette Mayer Gallery is free and open to the public. We are located at 709 Walnut Street, 1st Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19106. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00am – 5:00pm.

For more information, please contact Emma McHold-Buke at: eburke@bmayerart.com.

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