

MARC HUNDLEY

MARC HUNDLEY INTERVIEWED BY SINISA MACKOVIC PORTRAITS AND STUDIO SHOTS BY COLEY BROWN

EXHIBITION IMAGES COURTESY TEAM GALLERY



SM: Why did you move to New York?

MH: My brother, Ian and I were modeling for a bit (laughs), so we moved to do that but never really made any money from it. We started working for Michael Kors (laughs), doing PR as interns. We did that for a couple of years, which was kind of fun for a while, but it's fashion. Then I started working for artists and galleries, doing installs, carpentry, and all sorts of things.

SM: Why are you still here almost 20 years later?

MH: New York has kept me here. When Ian and I first visited, we just felt so comfortable and now it's really hard to leave. I'm more inclined to leave now than back then. We didn't really have any direction. I didn't have any art ambitions. I didn't know what I was going to do. Then, probably in my early 30s, I thought "If I do this thing, I could do it here – the art thing". It becomes that way for a lot of things too. I guess I could go somewhere else and do it but I guess this is the art world. I could have fun in the art world for a little while. I'll see how this feels.





JOAN BAEZ

IS ALIVE

220 ROEBLING ST OCTOBER 21

SM: Your art practice seems to have more in common with graphic design than with what would necessarily be deemed fine art. Is this a deliberate trajectory?

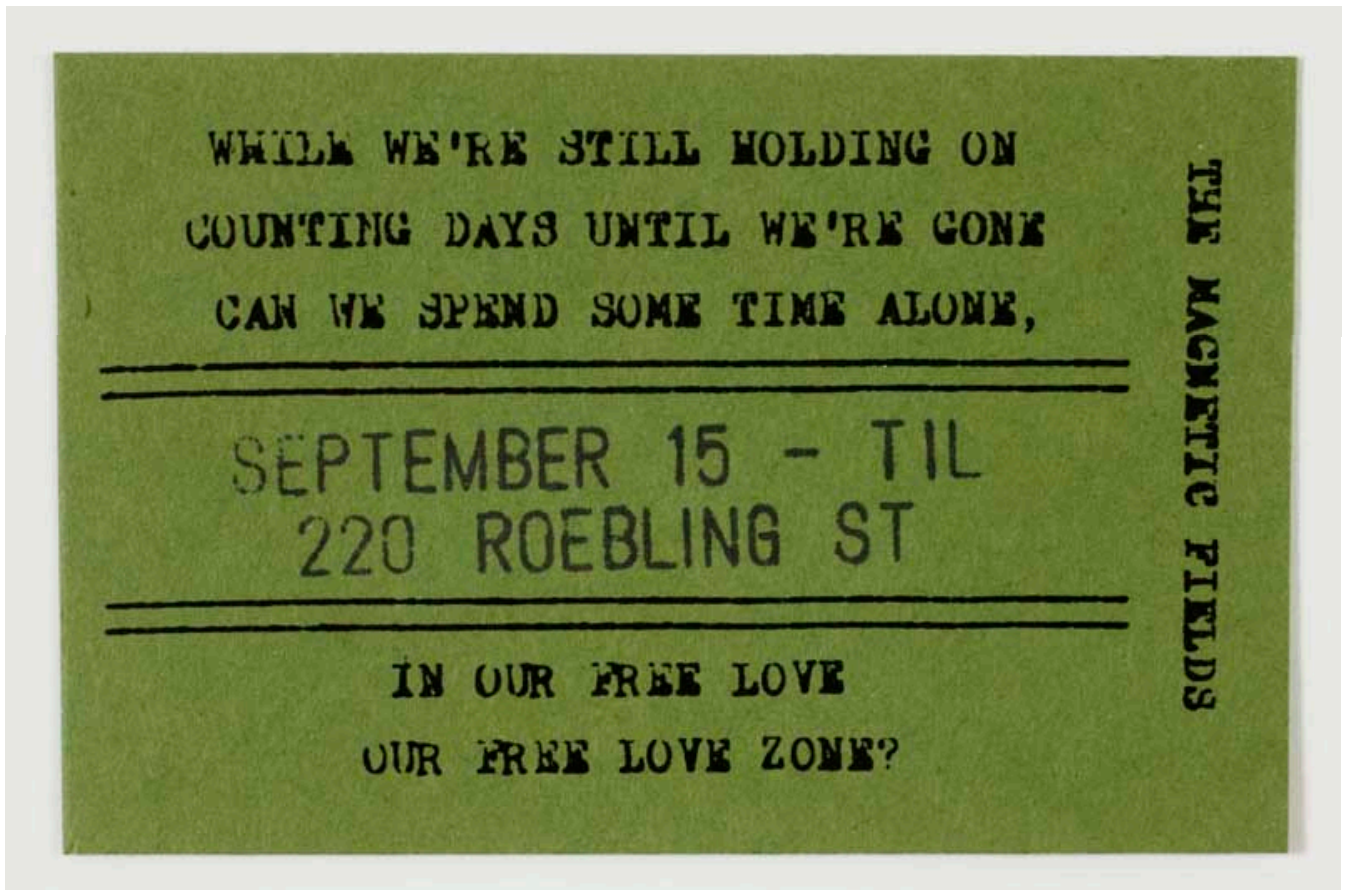
MH: I didn't go to art school. I went to school for graphic design for one year. The shortest course I could find, because I didn't want to go to school. It was more or less a continuing education program for older people changing careers. Desktop publishing was a term people would use a lot. It was all paste up. I didn't really apply any of it until I started making art. When I attach myself to something, I needed to figure out how to say it. I know what the words are, I just have to graphic design it. I don't want my work to be something that someone doesn't get. If it could be blended into something else, like advertising, that'd be great.

SM: So is it alignment with advertising that makes graphic design more attractive?

MH: I think it's the function. I love art but I figure my work makes more sense if it seems like it's functioning the way everything else functions in the world — it's sold to you. I guess there's another part that grounds it. Instead of just some statement, floating, it's actually *this* person, *this* place and *this* time.

SM: What was the first artwork you made?

MH: I guess it was actual advertising for my friend Matt Connors. He used to show films in Williamsburg in '97 or '98. Ian and I made posters to put around Williamsburg for the films. He played *Scorpio Rising* by Kenneth Anger and *Helen, Queen of the Nautch Girls* by Anthony Korner. Then I started making t-shirts.





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SM: And how did the concert posters develop?

MH: Well, I made the Clash t-shirt, which was kind of like a rock t-shirt. So I thought I could do the same thing with a poster, but this time it was a little more like me saying it, because it was my address on it and a date. I didn't want to do a poster that says "whatever words, The Clash". It seems a little like a quote in the subway or something. I wanted to make it more functional, so someone looks at it and thinks that The Clash played somewhere.

SM: So it's more subtle?

MH: I guess it alleviates the pressure of something being art.

SM: At your exhibition in Sydney at Darren Knight Gallery in March, you showed older work; the work people would associate as yours – the posters. You also made new works, the banners. Why did you want to break free of those parameters that you set for yourself and were in for so long?

MH: I wanted to make the banners for a while. That exhibition was a chance to do it. It kind of allowed for it because I had to fill this gallery. It seemed like the right time to say those things and I just had to say it big. It was a big wall and I could just say one word on it – "Everybody". It was like a protest, but there is part of me that thinks that protests don't really work.



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**Do let's be friends
And tell each other
What we're like.
I hate being cautious,
Don't you?**

**The Voyage Out
Virginia Woolf
33 New Rd. Aug. 27th**

SM: But does a protest work in a gallery context?

MH: Well, it is problematic because there is a price tag involved. I would love it if they were really cheap so someone could buy it and feel like they could destroy it in the street one day. Since the things I make are pretty easily made, I hope that it serves as an example that you can do this too, just get some stencils from the hardware store. I don't mind them in a gallery because I want to tell everyone, not just people who protest or the media.

SM: It always feels like you're making these ephemera for situations that, while they have this apparent function, the function isn't carried out. Like concert posters for a concert, which never took place, a protest banner for a protest, which never took place. It's fictional nostalgia.

MH: Yeah that's true.

SM: Then you had the show at Art Since the Summer of '69 here in New York in May.

MH: They wanted to do a show and asked me "Do you ever do anything more sexual?" I don't know why they would ask me that but it got me thinking. Then I remembered that it's all I usually want to talk about. I had started this dictionary project where I just went through my dictionary picking out images that I sexualised. I was at home by myself all the time and I would see certain images and I couldn't not sexualise them. They are all over the place, but I think you get it that they've all been perverted in a way.



THE ROSS





SM: Anyone who knows you would get it...

MH: Yeah (laughs). I made a little book to compliment the show. It's a small space, so it was a small book. I made benches and a table. I wanted it to be like a janitor's lunch-room. I blew some images up and put them up on the walls, so it's like porn in someone's garage or a janitor's closet.

SM: Now you've got a solo exhibition coming up at Team gallery? It's your first major show in New York. Why has it taken this long to be recognised at that level?

MH: I've been making art but I never really talked about it. I didn't care. Working in the art world makes it less appealing to join it. I liked just giving 50 posters to someone for their birthday or making a poster for Smiths/Morrissey night and giving it to my friends. Then we made the book together (*Weaverbird and Other Words*). When you asked me, I thought, "How do they even know what I make?" Jose from Team saw the book and I think that made what I do more concrete. He thought that I was serious about it. It has something to do with the work too, but generally I think the vehicle was that book. I think my work almost works better in a book. I would like most things to work in reproduction as well as they do in the original. Not to be about "This is such a beautiful, hand-made paper or whatever". It's more like "It's just newsprint, it's getting destroyed, it doesn't really matter. What does it say, it says this thing." I would like it to be more about that.

SM: It's nice the way your practice is more about reproduction than a precious object. You have almost taken what an artist would generally consider a secondary practice and made it your primary practice. So what's going up at Team for your show?

MH: For this show, I guess I'm recounting the last few years. I think I can explain it with the folded paper piece. I look at that original folded paper piece and then I see this new one I made, which is crumpled up around the edges, working harder to stay flat. It makes perfect sense. At the time of the first one, everything was good, same as always. Then right after, Dash died. Three other people I knew committed suicide. Ian got deported. My father fell terminally ill. I came out of a long-term relationship. People I knew were in rehab. Others were junkies. It seemed like everything was pretty rough. So the things for the show are all kind of dark and melancholic. I'm still doing advertising I guess. I think I'll build a bench for the show. I'm so tired of not being able to sit down. I would like for people to sit down and read the words. My initial connection with those words is through books or music, when I'm spending time with it. I'd love to do that for all my shows if there wasn't a place to sit down. I'd also love to make the bathrooms public at Team during the show.

Weaverbird & Other Words is available from Rainoff.

Marc Hundley, Joan Baez Is Alive opens September 15, 2011 at Team Gallery, New York.

- 01 *Marc in his studio*
- 02 *Studio*
- 03 *Joan Baez Live 220 Roebling, 2011 ink and acrylic on paper 38.5 x 35 inches, 48.25 x 44.25 framed unique*
- 04 *Free Love Ticket, 2011 ink on paper 2.75 x 4.25 inches unlimited edition*
- 05 *Studio*
- 06 *100,000 fireflies, 2011 ink and oil on paper 34 x 22 inches, 36.75 x 24 framed unique*
- 07 *I Don't call this life Do you? or, Being Cautious, 2011 acrylic on canvas 28 x 28 inches, 33 x 33 framed unique*
- 08 *The Rose, 2011 ink on paper 45 x 29.45 inches, 47.75 x 32 framed unique*
- 09 *Marc Hundley, Joan Baez Is Alive, Team Gallery, New York.*
- 10 *Marc in the studio*