

Rivington Arms

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For Immediate Release:

Jonah Koppel
Time and Ebb
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"Like other old men before me, I have discovered that the near in time is annoyingly confused, whereas at the end of the tunnel there are color and light. I can discern the features of every month in 1944 or 1945, but seasons are utterly blurred when I pick out 1997 or 2012."

– Vladimir Nabokov, *Time and Ebb*, 1945

Nabokov's "old man" sits reflecting in the process of writing his memoirs. As he writes he comes to realize that his memory of childhood is clear and exact, while his recent past is confused and nearly forgotten. This conception of memory has broader implications for how one understands his own cultural reality. The zeitgeists of times past congeal into cohesive form, while the specificity of one's own time remains allusive. It is in moments of decisive change that this awareness of – and ultimately estrangement from – one's own time is most realized. In the midst of such amorphous conditions, how does one find a mode of expression?

Jonah Koppel's work explores the relationship between the murkiness of contemporary cultural consciousness and the innate, if not desperate need to create.

The work in the exhibition is a selection of drawings on felt, sculpture, and collage. The drawings employ languages of Realism and Historicism; a labyrinth which circles in on itself is broken, its linear movement halted; a cubist construction collaged with an image of the imploding Twin Towers renders the sculpture useless; a portrait of Braque affixed with driftwood becomes a memorial. Plastacine busts function as academic portraits; exercises in the representation of a man and his psyche. Hanging sculptures engage allegory; amorphous figures wander beyond time — figures from a myth without narrative.

Koppel's work struggles to grapple with the schism between the totalizing visual languages of the twentieth century, and the nebulous realities of our future imperfect. In a time of extraordinary ambiguity, what structure can support its own mass without collapsing in upon itself?

