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Exhibition of historical and contemporary work by Judith Bernstein opens at Mary Boone Gallery



NEW YORK, NY.- On 9 January 2016, [Mary Boone Gallery](#) opened at its Chelsea location *Dicks of Death*, an exhibition curated by Piper Marshall of historical and contemporary work by Judith Bernstein.

Dicks of Death, a Marine nickname for the processed beef franks included with beans, is so termed for its foul taste and similarity in appearance to male genitalia. The offensively flavored and phallic shaped food is *Government Issue*, served to soldiers in ready-to-eat rations. Bernstein lifts this term to zero-in on the war-time phallus and to show us how aggression and patriotism is institutionally packaged to fuel political conflict.

This exhibition couples Bernstein's politicized phallic paintings (begun in 1966), *Screw Drawings* (begin in 1973), and her more recent work *Star Spangled Boner*. In *Union Jack-Off* (1967), Bernstein twists red saturated canvas into five bending phalluses. Emerging from a striped ground, these musty and mottled cocks both interrupt and fuse to the traditional patriotic motif. Next to the sexually expressive shapes, Bernstein scrawls "Union Jack-Off on U.S. Policy in Viet." However, white spew obstructs the yellow colored slogan, an irruption that connects to the artist's interest in scatological mark making. With each gesture and successive expression, Bernstein merges masculinity and patriotism to reveal how one inflates and supports the other. The works in this exhibition deploy willfully low artistic strategies – kitsch and graffiti – to disrupt any clean image of policy.

The continued engagement with screws and cocks closes in on the machinery of the military industrial complex. Central to Bernstein's work is the morphing of body parts into these political tools. Judith Bernstein is a celebrated artist, whose work has both utilized and undermined strategies of Pop since the 1960s. This exhibition reconsiders her investigation into the blurred distinction between patriotism and masculinity and the absorption of aggression into everyday politics.

The exhibition, at 541 West 24 Street, will be on view through 27 February 2016.

