

For immediate release

**Alison Knowles**

**THE BOAT BOOK**

**August 19 - September 9, 2015**

Closing reception: Wednesday September 9, 6-8pm



For her second exhibition with James Fuentes, Fluxus artist Alison Knowles will present the most recent addition to her oversized book project, which debuted at Something Else Gallery in New York with *The Big Book*, 1966. These books are built as installations organized around a spine, a fully immersive reading experience. From 1966 through 1969, *The Big Book* traveled to venues in Canada, Europe and the United States. A seminal work within Knowles's career, its influence led her to further investigations of the format with *The Book of Bean*, 1981 and a more intimately-tactile work, *The Finger Book of Ancient Language*, 1982.

With *The Boat Book*, 2014-2015 - which debuted at Art Basel Miami Beach - Knowles continues this investigation in a sculptural work whose structure is comprised of eight wood-framed pages, each four feet wide by eight feet high, on a central axis. Casters are attached to the bottom edge of each page, allowing them to turn. Each page presents an opportunity to literally go through it - whether by window, hole or tunnel - to the following page, creating a sequence of environments within the confines of the book. Like the experience of reading a traditional, hand-held book, the viewer/engager/reader of *The Boat Book* is completely absorbed in the exploration. Culling from sources as varied as a barn on the coast of Long Island, an old ship yard, the beaches of Lake Michigan and the New York Public Library Photo Collection, the nautical references and materials of *The Boat Book* render an ode to the artist's older brother, Lawrence Beckwith Knowles, a fisherman working on the fishing vessels in East Hampton since the 1950's. True to the concept of intermedia, which was developed by Knowles' late husband, the Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, *The Boat Book* is not a work that can be easily categorized. It is interdisciplinary in nature, embodying a juncture between sculpture, installation, sound work, performance, and of course, the book format. Inclusion of elements such as photography, collage, assemblage, silkscreen, inkjet print, handmade paper, beans, and personal ephemera, further expand the breadth of the work, tackling notions of the literary, the visual and self-reflexivity.

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**Alison Knowles** was born in New York, New York in 1933. She studied at Middlebury College, Vermont and received her BFA from Pratt Institute, New York in 1956. During her time at Pratt Institute she was a student of Adolph Gottlieb. Knowles joined James Fuentes in 2010, and had her first solo exhibition at the gallery in 2011.

Knowles is a founding member of Fluxus, notably the first woman to participate in the movement. She has exhibited and performed internationally since the 1960's. Venues where she has had solo shows and performances include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Kunsthalle Cologne, Germany; De Appel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Kunstkanzlei, Vienna, Austria; Stadtgalerie, Saarbrücken, Germany; Grand Palet Museum, Roskilde, Denmark; Museum of Contemporary Arts, Warsaw, Poland; The Drawing Center, New York; Emily Harvey Foundation, Venice, Italy; Musée des Moulages, Lyon, France; Tate Modern, London; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, among many others.

In 1968, Knowles received a Guggenheim Fellowship, and received grants from National Endowment for the Arts in 1981 and 1985. She has held educational appointments at Harvard University and Documenta X; and has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from Pratt Institute, the Maine College of Art and Colombia College.

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