

## **StoneFace**

An exhibition curated by Stacy Bengtson Fertig and Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer  
Featuring John Baldessari, Dan Graham, Jesse Aron Green, Lee Lozano, Rachel Mason,  
Richard Prince, Mark Roeder, and Maya Schindler

September 6 – November 9, 2007

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 6, 2007, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

FOCA is pleased to present **StoneFace**, the inaugural exhibition in the Curator's Laboratory project series. **StoneFace** is a celebration of deadpan comedy as a method of critique enacted through pleasure. The artists included operate on the conviction that laughter initiates a revelatory rupture. The stone-face of deadpan's humor enables the critical ambivalence of blankness that allows conflicting positions to coexist. Suspended between critical poles, **StoneFace** favors ambiguity to resolute pronouncements.

**StoneFace** gathers together eight artists from across generations in whose work deadpan functions as critique. For **Baldessari, Graham, Lozano, Roeder, and Mason**, the critique is often self-reflexive and constructed to expose structural dynamics in the art world. For **Prince and Schindler** critique is leveled at familiar tropes in everyday language use and **Green's** drawings of Buster Keaton play with social constructs of identity and acts of silencing. In deadpan, delivery is everything and the works in **StoneFace** share a proclivity for strategic terseness and silence. Buster Keaton's visage, known as the Great Stone Face, and the slow monotone of Steven Wright's standup are exemplary. Intelligence conceals itself behind an expressionless façade, often at the risk of appearing stupid. The tradition of deadpan art begins with Duchamp's tactical straight face – his poker face was a chess face – and develops through Warhol and Lichtenstein's perfection of stone-faced Pop. **StoneFace** presents deadpan as a necessary contemporary mode of self-critique where artists can comment on certain humorous aspects of today's art world while enjoying the very practices they critique.

Included in the exhibition will be a monitor screening quintessential deadpan comedians including Buster Keaton, Steven Wright, Gary Shandling, and Zach Galifianakis. A pamphlet featuring texts and a special interview on deadpan will accompany the exhibition.

**StoneFace** is the inaugural exhibition in a quarterly series of curatorial projects, entitled **Curator's Laboratory**, at FOCA's headquarters in Los Angeles' Chinatown. The Curator's Laboratory project series greatly enhances FOCA's mission of supporting emerging and mid-career California artists by reaching out to young curators who will present exhibitions in support of a curatorial thesis. In keeping with FOCA's historical goal to provide documentation of each exhibition, records of the curator's process of conceptualizing and organizing each exhibition will be posted on FOCA's website at [focala.org/projects](http://focala.org/projects). Over time this series of curatorial projects and associated web support will generate – for students, artists, curators, and the public – a valuable archive resource.

The Fellows of Contemporary Art (FOCA) is a non-profit independent art organization that supports contemporary art in California by underwriting the costs of exhibitions, catalogues, and other documentation. FOCA was formed in 1975 as a direct outgrowth of a support group of the Pasadena Art Museum. In addition to supporting exhibitions and artists, FOCA provides educational opportunities for its membership. These opportunities include visiting artists' studios, viewing private and public collections, touring other art venues, and providing discussions and lectures with guest speakers. FOCA organizes one domestic and one international tour for members each year.

FOCA is located at 970 N. Broadway, Suite 208, Los Angeles, CA 90012. [www.focala.org](http://www.focala.org)  
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