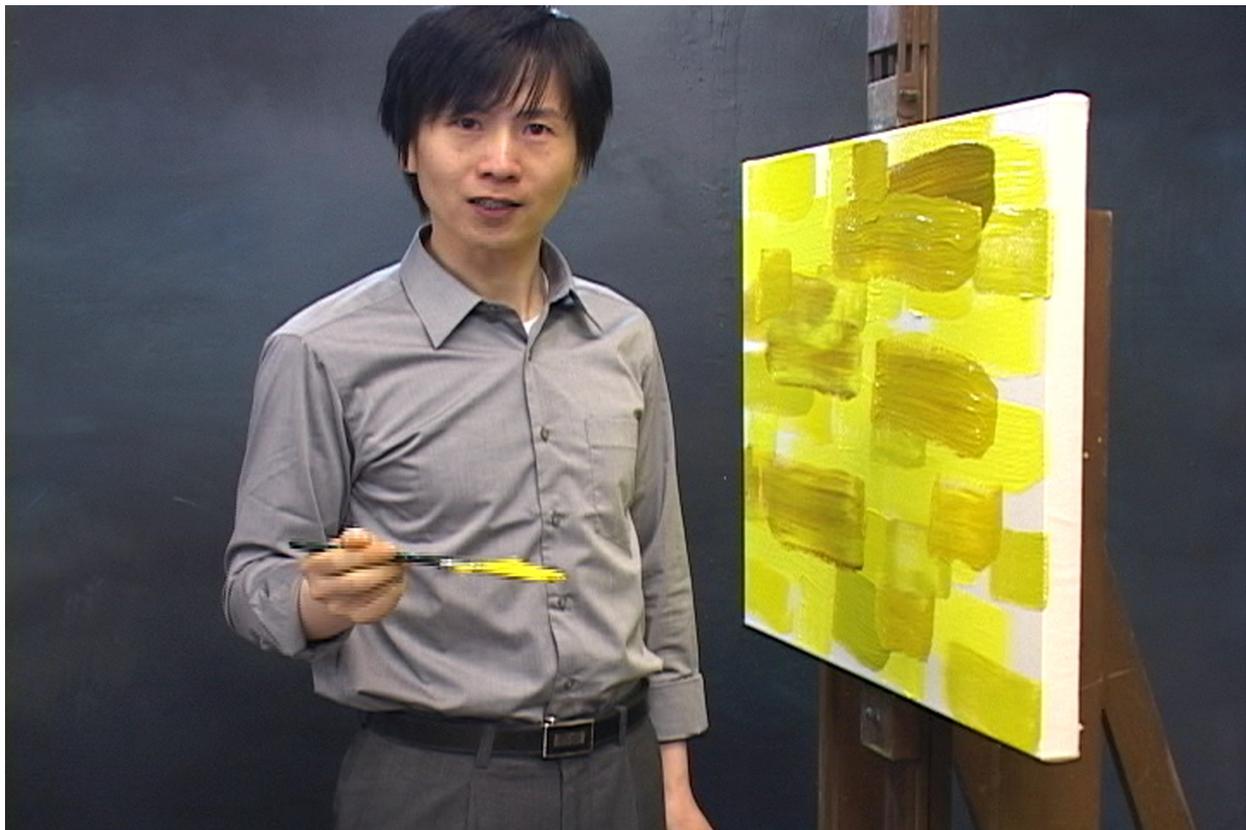


Teacher's Guide: for two concurrent exhibitions at Plug In ICA from April to June 2016

For our 2016 Spring Program, Plug In ICA is offering a combined tour of two exhibitions: *Continuing Studies* by Kim Beom and *No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock 'n' Roll: Poetry* by Allen Ruppberg along with a workshop. The guided tour and workshop will take the very concept of education, how we learn and the ways in which we are taught as the underpinning ideas to engage with the artwork of these two conceptual artists. Students will learn to define conceptual art, while they encounter artworks that question the ways in which we gain knowledge and how histories are told and formed. The tour will introduce students to Plug In ICA's history and then discuss the individual exhibitions, accompanied by a workshop led by a local artist. The tour and workshop can vary in length to suit your schedules but last approximately two hours.



Kim Beom, *Yellow Scream* (video still), 2012.

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i. Introduction to Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art:

Plug In ICA, established in 1972, was Manitoba's first artist-run center. For the first 15 years of its history, Plug In was one of the first (and few) organizations on the prairies to focus exclusively on the production and exhibition of contemporary art. The interest in contemporary art, coupled with a sense of isolation from large-scale cultural institutions such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery or The National Gallery, originally attracted artists to Plug In ICA. Belief in the idea of an artists' network as a social, aesthetic and economic alternative to those represented by commercial galleries and museums was the foundation of Plug In ICA.

Throughout its forty-three year history, Plug In ICA has encouraged and nurtured the development of other independent arts group in the province that address focused community needs (e.g., Video Pool; Mentoring Artists for Women's Art and Winnipeg Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival were all spawned by Plug In ICA).

In the late nineties, after twenty-five years of operating as an artist-run-centre, Plug In ICA began to re-envision its role in the local and national art community. Having arrived at a position of notable acclaim for its exhibitions and publications program, Plug In sought to have these programs matter in a larger way. To reach this goal, Plug In ICA launched three initiatives to connect with larger audiences and expand the reach of our programming: the national and international circulation of exhibitions; the development of a website; and the creation of an audience development initiative. These changes marked Plug In's transition from an artist-run-centre to something that resembled both a gallery and a museum, yet was neither – an interim phase during which a new hybrid was taking form.

The descriptions, and various models of, "institutes of contemporary art" in the UK and the US confirmed that Plug In's mission; priorities; and activities fit best within an ICA model. And while this model is itself a relatively fluid one, for Plug In ICA's purposes the ICA distinction meant: the generation of a thoroughly researched mix of exhibitions that offered multiple access points to contemporary art and ideas; insightful interpretation through publications, programs and events; and creating the facilities and environment for lively interaction among artists, art and audience.

With these goals in mind, in 2009 Plug In ICA made the decision to move from its location at 286 McDermott to a new purpose-built facility for art and education in partnership with the University of Winnipeg at the corner of Portage Avenue and Memorial Boulevard. This move professionalized Plug In ICA's exhibition space and expanded the ability to program multi-disciplinary activity that stretched what art, and what an ICA, could be. The facility was co-developed with the active participation of Plug In ICA, and hosts three permanent installations by internationally renowned artists Jimmie Durham, Dan Graham, Rodney Latourelle and Louise Withoft.

Plug In ICA expanded its mentorship opportunities by focusing on education in a number of ways, including making a summer residency (the Summer Institute) a regular part of its programming. The goal of the Summer Institute is to provide a space for professional artists and other cultural producers and (scientists, engineers, writers, curators, architects, philosophers, etc.) to research and produce work, individually or collaboratively. This program serves a distinct niche in that it provides collegial support for artists at all stages of their careers, following their basic training (university, art colleges, or equivalent experience). Faculty is hired, and provides feedback and support to artists on a peer-to-peer basis. Each year 10 to

15 artists participate in the program. The idea of encouraging mentorship and facilitating an open discourse has always, and continues to be, integral to Plug In ICA as an organization, and the Teachers Guide and High School Tour Program is built on these premises.

ii. Learning Objectives:

Students will:

1. Read and interpret visual materials—connecting art to diverse contexts and developing ways to speak about, and think through, contemporary art.
2. Communicate their ideas, experiences and feelings—developing critical reflection and thinking skills.
3. As part of the art workshop, students will create a conceptual art work that takes structures of learning and information gathering as its topic.

Assessment:

The teacher will decide on the appropriate assessment of this activity and communicate it to the class.

Curriculum connections:

Grade 9-12 Visual Arts

- The workshop will allow students to make and create visual art
- Students will respond to the work in the exhibition and make connections to the world around them, from the personal to the historical.

Grade 9-12 English Language Arts

- Students will explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences while managing ideas and information
- Students will be asked to comprehend and respond personally and critically to sculpture, performance, sound, film, and video
- Community will be built by introducing students to a local cultural organization and to a local artist

iii. Exhibition Outlines:

Exhibition: *Continuing Studies* by Kim Beom

April 22 to June 19, 2016

Kim Beom stands as a pinnacle of contemporary art in South Korea. Working within a conceptual art framework, his ideas are grounded in the lateralization of image-making from language to physical form. How meaning is made, who constructs it and for whom it is intended has a direct current in Kim's recent works and will be the focus of his solo exhibition at Plug In ICA. *A Rock that Learned the Poetry of Jung Jiyong* (2010) is a twelve hour video that in an absurdist gesture, has a literary professor teaching a rock the entire oeuvre of the Korean Modernist poet Jung Jiyong. This pedagogical inference is also played out in his video *Yellow Scream* (2012), which is a spoof on how-to-videos in general, but more specifically the impossibility of teaching someone how to be an abstract painter – an intangible practice in itself. *A Ship That Was Taught There Is No Sea* and *A Rock That Was Taught It Was a Bird* also shake the conventional structures of learning – who and what can be taught, disrupting the norms of pedagogy with illogical gestures and blatant humour. This exhibition will show Kim's

unique approach to learning, in its questioning of the accumulation of knowledge versus understanding.

Kim Beom is a South Korean artist whose singular practice defies simple categorization. Working with drawing, painting, video, sculpture, and performance, Kim poetically uncovers and dismantles conventions surrounding pedagogy and education. Further working to question and invert preconceived notions of perspective, Kim often employs animism within his works, collapsing the boundaries of living beings and inanimate objects. Kim's investigations of socio-political structures are characterized by his idiosyncratic sense of humour and a penchant for the absurd. The artist obtained a BFA and an MFA from Seoul National University, and a second MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. His work has been extensively featured in solo exhibitions including *The School of Inversion*, Hayward Gallery's Project Space, London; *Animalia*, REDCAT Gallery, Los Angeles; *Objects Being Taught They are Nothing but Tools*, The Cleveland Museum of Art, and most recently the survey exhibition *Kim Beom* at the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver. In addition, his work has been included in notable international exhibitions including the Istanbul Biennial, the Venice Biennale, and Media City Seoul.

Exhibition: *No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock 'n' Roll: Poetry*
Artist: Allen Ruppertsberg
April 22nd to June 19th, 2016

For his exhibition at Plug In ICA, Ruppertsberg invites audiences to file through his vast collection of images and clipped articles he has amassed in encyclopedic quantities of the history of rock and roll music in North America. *No Time Left To Start Again/The B and D of R 'n' R: Poetry* is one chapter in a larger body of work that posits infinite histories of rock n roll, tracing the lines of Gospel music or following the development of blue grassing. But for "Poetry" the section presented at Plug In ICA, he draws on a long largely undocumented history of Jazz and Blues. Each chapter has its unique colour scheme and set of poetic texts, which function as the background for thousands of possible histories to emerge. This work is contingent on the audience to file through boxes containing Ruppertsberg's massive collection of documents and images from obituaries to album covers, asking people to select and organize their own version of this history onto graphic silk-screened wall panels.

Internationally celebrated LA-based artist **Allen Ruppertsberg** is a pioneer of American conceptual art. Working in an expanded field, which spans paintings, drawings, installations, sculptures, and artist books, Ruppertsberg mines the forms and vocabularies of mass media and popular culture in order to critically dissect them. Ruppertsberg's practice is deeply engaged with language and uses it as a tool to break apart cultural mythologies and narratives. An avid collector, Ruppertsberg's personal archive – made up of newspapers, magazine covers, snapshots, home movies, educational slides, advertising and posters – serves as a regular resource for the artist, who often copies and classifies elements of the archive within his work. Ruppertsberg has been included in over 60 solo exhibitions and 200 collective exhibitions since the late 1960s, including the seminal exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* presented at the Kunsthalle Bern. Recent solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at the Skirball Culture Center, Los Angeles; Greene Naftali, New York; MFC-Michèle Didier, Paris; Wiels, Brussels; and The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. His works are included in esteemed collections internationally, including the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Foundation de Appel, Amsterdam, among others

iv. Connection Points:

Though these two exhibitions greatly differ in terms of format, style and content, they share a point of connection, centering on conceptual art and pedagogy.

In the 1960s artists in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America began experimenting with art that emphasized ideas instead of a physical product. As conceptual artists make ideas the essence of their work, conceptual art can be- and look like – almost anything. Conceptual artists use the materials and forms most appropriate to putting across their ideas, instead of melding their ideas to a specific framework such as drawing or painting.

Conceptual art came out of a desire to bypass the increasingly commercialised art world by emphasizing processes and methods of production of work. Conceptual art practice emerged when the authority of the art institution and the preciousness of unique aesthetic objects – artworks- were being widely challenged by artists and critics. Conceptual artists interrogated the possibilities of art-as-idea or art-as-knowledge, exploring linguistic, mathematical, and process-oriented dimensions of thought and aesthetics, as well as invisible systems, structures, and processes.

Kim Beom and Allen Ruppertsberg work within the tradition of conceptual art, particularly in and through their critique of institutional spaces and their proposals for new ways of disseminating knowledge. Ruppertsberg and Kim explore and break down the role of the institution in society, rejecting museums and galleries as defining authorities. Both Ruppertsberg and Kim take up the museological tropes of collection and display within their practice, exposing the ways in which these choices are always interrelated with art history, history, ideology, identity, and collective memory. Education and the dissemination is deeply embedded within these institution's and practices.

In *No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock 'n' Roll: Poetry*, Ruppertsberg's brings together several thousand digital scans of record covers, photographs, newspaper obituaries, maps and other ephemera. Assembled from decades of rock 'n' roll ephemera, purchased at flea markets and garage sales: amateur photos, clipped-out newspaper obituaries, and images of old records, the artifacts are photocopied, laminated, and hung on peg-boards to create an expansive, encyclopedia-like installation. The public is invited to sort through the archive and create their own history, becoming at once archeologist, historian and artist. Ruppertsberg creates a new form of museum, a museum in which the viewers actively creates his or her own content, reversing our preconceived expectations of how meaning is read in a gallery setting.

An innovative and sly reversal of expectation is a trademark of Kim Beom's practice. His video work *Yellow Scream* portrays Kim's desire to push conventions of knowledge and ask the viewer to question how knowledge is acquired and disseminated.

Yellow Scream takes as its jumping off point instructional television programs, specifically Bob Ross' now iconic how-to videos from the cult PBS painting series *The Joy of Painting*. Mimicking Ross' relatively standard format, the narrator of *Yellow Scream*, played by an actor, provides a detailed course on technique, from priming canvases to color theory. This is intercut with occasional comments on the meditative aspects of painting, aspects with which the artist engages through the visualization of a balance canvas to controlling his breath. "Now relax and try to feel your breathing, because screaming is part of breathing." As this point, the narrator's

brush strokes are accompanied by a variety of screams: “a long scream that sounds like when you’re hurt, as if someone yanked your arm behind you or pulled you by the hair”; “a scream induced by psychological pain”; and “a more pained, wronged, and regretful scream.” Nearing the painting’s completion, he advises, “Let’s mix a bit of permanent green and add some refreshing hope and pleasure to the screams of joy.” As fully detailed in the curatorial text, Beom flips the framework of the how-to video, portraying the impossibility of teaching art-making as a practice.

v. Framework for Gallery Visit:

Classroom preparation (before coming to Plug In ICA):

- As a class go over a selection of the provided resources.
- Answer the worksheet questions individually or as a group.
- In smaller groups discuss some of the themes you think will be important in the exhibitions.

Activity (at Plug In ICA):

Participate in a tour of Kim Beom’s *Continuing Studies* and Allen Ruppersberg’s *No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock ‘n’ Roll: Poetry* guided by gallery staff. This may include an optional tour of Plug In facilities; including the office, permanent collection of artwork, and rooftop terrace (weather permitting).

Participate in a workshop where students will work with a local artist to participate in a conceptual art exercise.

vi. Background information:

Curatorial Overview of Kim Beom’s *Continuing Studies*

“...Let’s put some anguished screaming into it. A long scream that sounds like when you’re hurt, as if someone yanked your arm behind you or pulled you by the hair.”

These directives are from Kim Beom’s video *Yellow Scream* (2012). The work’s comic effect, which spoofs how-to videos, is sustained through language, repetition, a flip in logic, and the absurd. Along with information on mixing paint with linseed oil to acquire varied textures, and to strategize composition, the instructor inserts long and short affected screams as he moves his brush across the canvas. Most instructional art videos teach verisimilitude and technique over concept and meaning. Kim slips into the abstract, overlaying an ambiguity. He dually implies the formulaic qualities of creating abstract paintings and alleges the overall implausibility of teaching art-making, which itself is an intangible practice that averts direct meaning.

Artists often have to justify the ambiguities of their own making: What does it mean to make art? What is art’s purpose? And how is an audience meant to interpret their work? *Continuing Studies* is a collection of drawing, video, sculpture, installation and painting by Kim, spanning twenty years, that rests these questions within a larger framework of education and learning. How does one teach someone to understand, and inversely, how does someone come to understand the teachings of another? The works in this exhibition take their structure from conventional strategies of learning (lectures, books, how-to videos), but lead away from

expectations as a rock is taught the entire oeuvre of the Modernist Korean poet Jung Jiyong or a model ship learns it will never touch the sea.

Pedagogical inference is made explicit in these two works, but the professor who specializes in the work of Jung Jiyong or the scientist who methodically informs the ship will never know the success of their teaching. How can they test their students? How can these objects convey their understanding? What are the markers of knowledge? *Props #3 and #5* are small intimate watercolours that resemble graduation diplomas. The definition of language and accreditation are left to lines and shapes. Proof of one's knowledge blurs into graphic compositions of standardized order, as in Kim's drawing, *A Draft of a School of Inversion* (2009) which depicts a generic institutional building perfect for learning the tools of one's trade, but which is inverted like a photographic negative.

Kim's humour is immediate, but also drifts into a slow questioning of perception that resides in the self. Two simple drawings *Self-injury Handbook* (1994) and *Self Accusation Glossary* (1994) are direct plays on self-help books, but with a dark self-effacing, self-inflicting edge that seems to close in on common anxieties. The drive to learn, to educate oneself, to be better are deeply sown social mores that transpire numerous cultures and are made manifest in the ways we are taught. This exhibition's title, *Continuing Studies*, follows a line through Kim's works that is directed inward and out onto the educational structures that come to define and give credit to what we know. But also, it is self-referential of the institution that presents this exhibition, which is situated on the University of Winnipeg campus in a building that houses part of the Continuing Education Department where learning is marked and graded. The exhibition of this select work by Kim is not a direct critique of the institutions it inhabits, but is a push at the rigidity of what these structures take for granted. Even this text stands rigid in interpreting work that pokes the fabric of how meaning is conveyed and read. What information it offers should unfurl in place of the artist and work it references.

Curatorial Overview of *No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock 'n' Roll: Poetry*:

In 1969 Allen Ruppersberg opened Al's Café to customers who entered a seemingly typical North American diner with a menu that was made up of small assemblages, varying from "three rocks with crumpled paper" to "simulated burned pine needles a la Johnny Cash, served with a live fern." He made orders on the spot per request. Each came with beer and was presented as an item for contemplation and discussion. The café as an artwork in itself, articulating a social space around the way aesthetic objects, shapes and forms are received. This defining work marked Ruppersberg's embrace of ephemeral material, the aesthetics of community advertising, language, performance and collecting that traverse from the artist's process to the audience's action.

Ruppersberg is a collector. "Honey, I Rearranged the Collection" is an announcement the artist put forward as a brightly coloured poster with a gradient background and bold black text, appropriating the aesthetic of event posters most typical to Los Angeles. This multiple is part of *The Novel that Writes Itself*, a series of text-based posters that cumulatively read as a collection of poetic reflections and dissections of language. The series began in 1978, expanding until the Colby Printing Company where all the posters were produced closed its doors a couple of years ago. Until that point the work in various stages (460 distinct posters by 2013) had been shown in many forms and parts, often as floor to ceiling wallpaper arrangements. In a barrage of coloured backgrounds the enigmatic texts of each individual

poster became mere details in an overall image. Its pieces, the posters, were to be arranged and re-arranged, its meaning resting not in a finished overall image, but in the process of compiling fragments into something whole, conveying a message that is never static.

No Time Left To Start Again/The Birth and Death of Rock 'n' Roll, presented in part at Plug In ICA, is formed of many adjustable parts, built from Ruppertsberg's immeasurable collection of records, sheet music, magazines, photographs, article clippings and music paraphernalia. This vast array of historical material catalogues various trajectories of North American music from the early 1900s until the early 70s, at a point Ruppertsberg sees as a "time rock and roll was becoming something other than its original self." His vast collection amassed in encyclopedic quantities posits infinite histories of rock n roll, tracing the lines of Gospel music and following the development of Boogie-Woogie, Blue Grass and RnB, to name only a few. This material is divided into five chapters. Each has a unique colour scheme and set of poetic texts, which function as the background for thousands of possible histories to emerge.

Poetry, the section presented at Plug In ICA, draws on a long largely undocumented history of Jazz and Blues, and is left to be mined, arranged and re-arranged by our audiences. This work is contingent on people filing through various boxes containing Ruppertsberg's massive yet select and edited collection. He asks people to re-imagine this history and his own perception of it, inviting them to sift through and present a version that they physically construct and turn into an overall image. On the walls Ruppertsberg hangs eight pegboard panels for people to clip their selections. Graphic forms are silk-screened in bright colours across the panels. Some contain a vertical pennant shape that has a word written down it; presented together they form a poem. Others have ringed targets and all are to be used by the audience, who are asked to perform the historian – to conceive a history, whether probable or knowledgeable, that will soon be undone and rewritten.

vii. Definitions:

Assemblage

A three-dimensional composition made from a variety of traditionally non-artistic materials and objects.

Conceptual Art

In the 1960s artists in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America began experimenting with art that emphasized ideas instead of a physical product. In 1967 artist Sol LeWitt gave this new art a name in his essay "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." He wrote, "The idea itself, even if it is not made visual, is as much of a work of art as any finished product." Conceptual artists use their work to question the notion of what art is, and often rejected museums and galleries as defining authorities. The work of Conceptual artists helped to put photographs, musical scores, architectural drawings, and performance art on an equal footing with painting and sculpture

Concept

A concept is an idea or thought, so the term conceptual art means literally 'idea art' – or art about ideas.

Instruction based art

The use of instructions was a major strategy used by Conceptual artists. Among its principal originators was Sol LeWitt, whose instructions for several series of geometric shapes or detailed **line** drawings, made directly on the wall surface, sometimes took teams of people days or weeks to execute.

viii. Worksheet:

Respond to each of the following questions with at least three sentences:

1. In his important essay on conceptual art, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art", artist Sol LeWitt wrote, "The idea becomes a machine that makes the art." What do you think he meant by this statement?

2. In Kim Beom's *A Rock That Learned the Poetry of Jung Jiyong* (2010), a video shows a professor lecturing to a rock, for 212 minutes, about the modern South Korean poet. The teacher draws complex charts and graphs on a dry-erase board, asks rhetorical questions and pauses every once in a while, as if waiting for the stone's response. To the left of the video monitor, the rock from the video rests on a table, inviting viewers to wonder if the epic lesson has changed the sedimentary mass in any way. *A Rock That Was Taught It Was a Bird* (2010) and *A Ship That Was Taught There Is No Sea* (2010) follow a similar logic. As the anthropomorphized items sit on the chairs and tables, one cannot help but mentally insert a human student or worker into their seats. What is Kim Beom saying about education and its limits with this work?

3. Make a list of your criteria for what art is by considering these questions:

- What should an artwork provide to both the maker and the viewer?
- Who is it for?
- Where does one encounter art?
- What is the role of the artist?

Compare, discuss, and debate your criteria with friends or classmates. Which criteria do you have in common and which do you disagree about?

ix. Sources

Link to Plug In ICA:

<http://plugin.org/>

Continuing Studies by Kim Beom

Animalia exhibition essay

http://www.redcat.org/sites/redcat.org/files/gallery/linked-files/2011-06/ExhibitionBrochure_0.pdf

The Birth and Death of Rock n Roll: Poetry by Allen Ruppensberg

Images of Allen Ruppensberg's work

<http://www.moma.org/collection/artists/5084>

Essay on Allen Ruppensberg:

http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist_detail&id_artist=34