

Things... Things Fall Apart

Curated by Alex Glauber and David Lewis

February 3 - March 6, 2021

**Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.**

This exhibition, with artists from the gallery program as well as an important private collection, takes its title from two Ed Ruscha drawings, *Things* (2014) and the later *Things Fall Apart* (2017). Yeats immortalized the phrase “Things Fall Apart” in his 1919 poem “The Second Coming,” which he penned in the midst of the Spanish Flu Pandemic. Nearly four decades later, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe used it as the title of his debut novel about the corrosive effects of European colonialism. Now the current exhibition extends this century-old apocalyptic nightmare into a visual tone-poem: A dance of individual isolation and fragmented self (i.e., lockdown) paired against the possibility of art as connectivity and connection in an age of encroaching dread.

**Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?**

—William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1919)

Wallace Berman, Sadie Benning, Barbara Bloom, Robert Colescott, Thornton Dial, Todd Gray, Wally Hendrick, On Kawara, Josh Kline, Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo, Gordon Parks, Ed Ruscha, Deborah Roberts, Haim Steinbach, Kyle Thurman, Martin Wong.