

ARTFORUM

Matt Keegan

D'AMELIO TERRAS
525 West 22nd Street, Ground Floor
April 23–June 18



View of “I Apple NY,” 2011.

A great amount of work—research and its resulting material objects—has been put into Matt Keegan’s latest and meticulously thought out solo exhibition at D’Amelio Terras. With the cool remove of a cultural anthropologist and the pragmatic aesthetic of a designer, Keegan has amassed a visual archive—*cum*—love song to the city under the moniker “I [Apple] NY,” which he created with David Reinfurt—a wink to the ubiquitous “I [Heart] NY” logo whose creator, Milton Glaser, is interviewed by the artist in lieu of a press release.

The main gallery can be experienced as a microcosm of the built environment; the perimeter offers a frieze of color photographs (snapped by Keegan throughout the five boroughs) attached to sheet metal panels painted—as are four of five freestanding sculptures—in the exact colors of New York City bridges. An aluminum mantelpiece reading CIRCULATION (all works 2011) converses with stacked posters designed by Jakob Kolding and copies of “A History of New York,” an “unlimited edition” pictorial reader chronicling city history from Henry Hudson through 9/11 and, significantly, the death of Jane Jacobs.

The living city is never so neatly composed, and Keegan’s reference-laden nested logic leaves little room for intuitive response. Until, that is, one stumbles upon *Biography/Biographer*, a nine-minute documentary looping in a disconnected room. The video provides a political-is-personal narrative entry point to the aggregate through the artist’s father, Ed, who charmingly recollects his teenage employment at a private golf course frequented by Robert Moses, the “master builder” and czarlike visionary of midcentury urban renewal. Ed’s storytelling offers historical context for the sociopolitical layers we move through today and pushes the motif of “the city” toward an imagined landscape, where the infrastructure of memory is as fundamental to urban experience as parkways and bridges. Referencing Robert Caro’s 1974 book *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, the elder Keegan muses, “It wasn’t just a biography; it was a part of my life.”

— Corrine Fitzpatrick