

FREDERICKS & FREISER

Robert Overby

Esquire Showcard: Works from 1969 through 1991

September 9 through October 22

Preview: September 8, 6 – 8 pm

Fredericks & Freiser is pleased to present an exhibition of works by **Robert Overby**.

Throughout his career, **Robert Overby** used the fictitious signature, “Esquire Showcard” that he stamped onto the backs of paintings and drawings. If looked at singularly, “esquire” can be defined as an ambiguous title given to someone out of courtesy. Its nature is self-referential—it is a title given solely for the purpose of having a title. On the other hand, “showcard” is devoid of any of that entitlement. It is a tool used in advertising and links itself to a different type of life. When these two words are combined, they create an alter-ego that acts as a joining of Overby’s fine art and graphic design practice. The words mirror each other, and in turn, Overby, himself. This dichotomy allowed for Overby to approach his art from a different vantage point.

In examining Overby’s oeuvre, there is a prevalence of works that use the idea of a “montage”—a way in which one can create a wholly singular work from different fragments and components. By using that conceptual framework as a lens to examine Overby’s pieces, we pinpoint various instances where his graphic design background can be seen as informing and influencing his fine art process. Paintings, works on paper, and installations that layer, project, and translate different visual motifs onto themselves, and each other. Through the use of a grid, as Overby noted in his 1988 sketchbook, he is allowed complete range of content from non-objective to figurative.

The works in this exhibition range from figurative to abstract, from 1969-1991. They act as a chronology of Overby’s stylistic practice and his shift back and forth between the two. In a promotional brochure produced by Overby around 1984, he is noted as saying that “the philosophy of [graphic design] doesn’t cross over [into the art], but the form does.” The use of geometry and grids is seen as solidifying and creating a middle ground where figuration and abstraction exist together—where the boundary between Overby’s graphic design and fine art practice become blurred.

Curated by Miller Robinson, Linda Burnham, and the Estate of Robert Overby.

About the Artist

Robert Overby (1935-1993) rarely showed in his lifetime. He had his first solo show in New York in 1996 at Fredericks & Freiser. Subsequently he has had retrospectives at the Hammer Museum, LA; Luckman Gallery, California State University, LA; GAMEc, Bergamo (travelled to Bergen Kunsthall, Centre D’Art Contemporain, Geneva, and Le Consortium, Dijon). His work has been collected by the Art Institute of Chicago; Whitney Museum of American Art; MoCA, LA; SF MoMA; LACMA; and MoMA, NY. This will be his 6th solo exhibition at Fredericks & Freiser.

Fredericks & Freiser is located at 536 West 24th Street, New York, NY. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. For more information, please contact us at (212) 633 6555 or info@fredericksfreisergallery.com, and visit us online at www.fredericksfreisergallery.com, and on Instagram [@fredericksandfreiser](https://www.instagram.com/fredericksandfreiser).