



michèle didier

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **RAYMOND PETTIBON** ***PUNK cabinet de curiosités*** ***MADE IN Raymond Pettibon: 1978-1986***



September 13 - November 16, 2013  
Opening Thursday September 12, 2013, from 6 pm to 9 pm

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### **mfc-michèle didier**

66, rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris  
info@micheledidier.com - www.micheledidier.com  
Phone +33 (0)1 71 97 49 13 - Mobile +33 (0)6 09 94 13 46 - Fax +32 (0)2 374 75 98



Partner of the exhibition



## RAYMOND PETTIBON

Raymond Pettibon isn't French despite the French sonority of his name. Far from the French choreographer Marius Petipa, who has a resembling name, Raymond Pettibon is closer to a rude and rough movement than to the harmony of the ballet master.

Representing the West Coast culture, Raymond Pettibon, born Raymond Ginn in 1957, lives in California at Hermosa Beach. Self-taught artist, he quickly leaves his job as a math teacher to focus on drawing for album covers produced by SST Records, a label founded by his brother Greg Ginn, who is also founder of the punk group *Black Flag*. It is Raymond who came up with the group's stage name; it is also him who creates *Black Flag's* iconic draped logo made of four vertical black lines. The artist decides then to change his last name, Ginn, into his *nom-de-punk*, Pettibon, a nickname given by his father.

Taking their points of departure in the Southern California punk-rock culture of the late 1970s and 1980s and the "do-it-yourself" aesthetic of album covers, comics, concert flyers, and fanzines that characterized the movement, his drawings have come to occupy their own genre of potent and dynamic artistic commentary. Raymond Pettibon's work embraces a wide spectrum of American "high" and "low" culture, from the deviations of marginal youth to art history, literature, sports, religion, politics, and sexuality.

The medium the artist loves the most is drawing, and he draws everywhere can: album covers, flyers, skateboard decks, even on walls. Pettibon will also be interested in video and film, often through collaboration with others. It is with Mike Kelley that he filmed *Sir Drone* in 1989, shot from over the shoulder, totally assuming the amateur character of the result. In the film, Pettibon plays the role of a fake CBS journalist filming a chronicle about the first steps of a fictitious punk group consisting of Mike Kelley and the musician Mike Watt.

Raymond Pettibon and Mike Kelly, together with Paul McCarthy form the California «"bad boy" trifecta», using Cary Levine's words in his recent publication *Pay for your Pleasures*<sup>1</sup>. A common political strategy underlies all three artist's artistic approach, criticizing at the same time the nostalgia of the '60 counterculture and the conservatism of Reagan's era. This brings them individually to create a strange visual language, sometimes inappropriate, challenging the limits of art, and even the limits of genre, sex, and bad taste. Their works place the public in uncomfortable situations, forcing them to reconsider their own values.

<sup>1</sup> *Pay for Your Pleasures* - Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon, Cary Levine, University of Chicago Press, 2013

## The exhibition *PUNK cabinet de curiosités* *MADE IN Raymond Pettibon: 1978-1986*

This September 2013, mfc-michèle didier gallery takes the appearance of a concept store, or more precisely and at the same time more mysteriously, a punk cabinet of curiosities.

Between the years 1978 and 1986 Raymond Pettibon produced a trove of graphic works for the Southern California punk band Black Flag, as well as for Red Cross, The Minutemen, Nig Heist, and many others. Published predominately by SST Records, which was founded by Pettibon's brother Greg, the exhibition features over two hundred gig flyers, artists' books, album covers, posters, T-shirts, stickers, skateboard decks, and the first prints by Pettibon.

This exhibition shows a great preview of the artistic youth of Raymond Pettibon, his punk period. Some of his productions are so tough you have to look away: castration, dismemberment, suicide, murder, these are all the themes he turns to. Pettibon likes to point out the unbalanced faces of society, through one-shot images, which can both be funny and violent and macabre at the same time: a scene where two men are fighting with a knife has the following caption: "Your girlfriend called me chicken" or a skeleton on a stage, saying to the audience "Life is a joke", with caption: "This is the punch line."

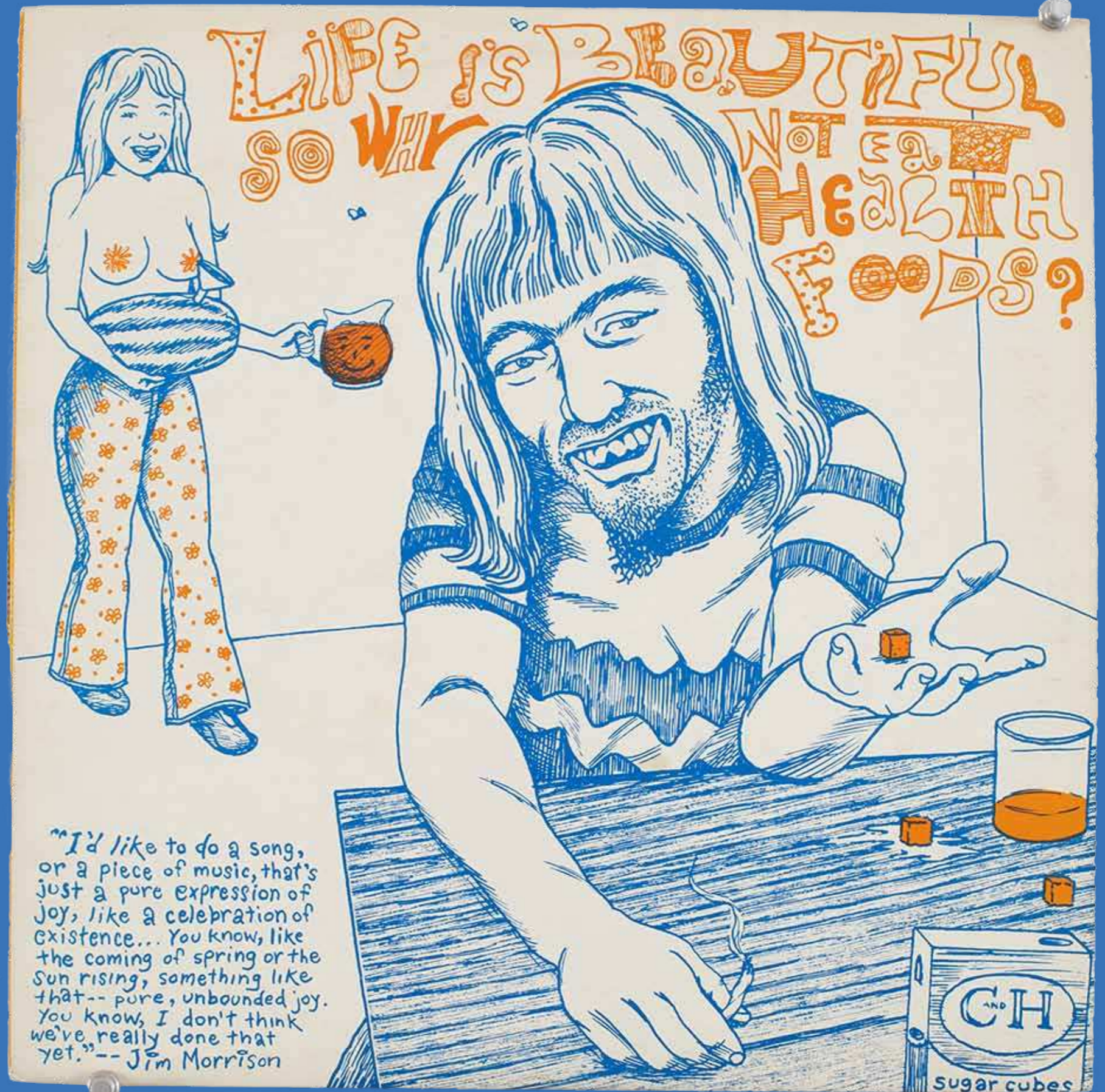
«(My drawings) are violent,» Pettibon, 24, admits. «And that's dictated by the medium, in that I just use one frame. It's like taking one frame out of a movie or one crucial scene out of a book at a critical point. You can't really be subtle.»

Beginning with Raymond Pettibon's first artists' book «Captive Chains,» published in 1978, the exhibition contains a myriad body of explicit, graphic, sexual and violent material. The show concludes with the announcement card for Pettibon's first New York City one-man exhibition held at the Semaphore Gallery in March 1986, on which the text reads: «I am the wrench in people's lives, really fixing them up.»

There are already a number of «serious» Pettibon collectors, and it's inevitable that when punk is history, the art of Raymond Pettibon will be considered an essential chapter.

«It'll happen like it did in the '60s with the psychedelic posters», he predicts.

Excerpts from Black Flag Cover is Pure Pettibon, an article by Jeff Spurrier published in the Los Angeles Times, July 1st 1984 have been used in order to make this press release. All of Raymond Pettibon's quotes are issued from that same article.



GOLDEN VOICE PRESENTS:

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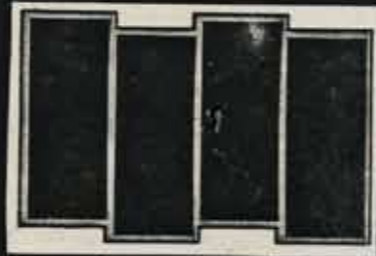
5612 SUNSET 8 PM

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Send stamp for complete catalog of records and merchandise to: SST Records, P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260

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For any further information, please contact:

mfc-michèle didier  
info@micheledidier.com  
+33 (0)1 71 97 49 13  
www.micheledidier.com

66 rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, 75003 Paris  
Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 12 am to 7 pm  
Subway: République, Strasbourg Saint-Denis, Arts et Métiers

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