

For Immediate Release

## **EVENING SALE: BETWEEN CONNOISSEURSHIP AND HUMILIATION- WORKS FROM THE SCOTT BENZEL COLLECTION**

**AHEAD OF THE CURVE**

### **ACTUAL SIZE CELEBRATES THE PIONEERING VISION AND PHILANTHROPY OF SOFTWARE ENTREPRENEUR AND CUTTING-EDGE LOS ANGELES COLLECTOR WITH THE SALE OF WORKS FROM THE LEGENDARY SCOTT BENZEL COLLECTION**

**Important Knockoffs, Kitsch, and Envable, Problematic Objects Sale at Actual Size  
Los Angeles To Be Accompanied by Educational Programs for Collectors in New  
Contemporary Fakes, Kitsch, and Enviabes Markets**

**ACTUAL SIZE HOLDS FIRST PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF WORKS FROM THE  
COLLECTION IN LOS ANGELES AT CIRRUS GALLERY, MARCH 10 – May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Between Connoisseurship and Humiliation: Post-War and Contemporary Knockoffs,  
Kitsch, and Envable, Problematic Objects ~ Evening Sale**

**Los Angeles** — Actual Size is proud to announce the auction of a major selection of the remarkable Scott Benzel Collection of important knockoffs, kitsch, and enviable, problematic objects assembled over more than two decades by one of the world's most pioneering collectors, entrepreneurs and philanthropists. A Single Owner grouping of 60 lots will be offered throughout the Evening Sale and is expected to achieve in excess of \$25. Many of the works represent the leading forgers of the contemporary world that Mr. Benzel has supported since the very beginnings of their careers, many will be offered at estimates reflecting his adventurous, start-up spirit.

The pre-sale exhibition will offer visitors an eye-opening survey of contemporary knockoffs, kitsch, and enviable objects as well as a unique glimpse into the world of a fascinating and very prescient collector. This sale will highlight Mr. Benzel's enterprising spirit to collectors who are new to the endeavor, including those in emerging markets for fakes, knockoffs, and kitsch. In conjunction with this sale Actual Size will develop the educational potential of the auction by presenting special lectures in Moscow, Hong Kong and London addressing the question: *"What is the responsibility of a fakes, kitsch, and enviable, problematic objects collector?"*

**Scott Benzel states** *"Collections reflect the sensibility of the collector; I tend to be drawn to knockoffs and kitsch that have ideas imbedded in them, but not works that are dryly conceptual. One of my ideals for a fake is that there are thoughts and ideas behind it, but that the work nevertheless has so much visual content that it appeals to viewers who have no understanding of*

*those ideas. I am drawn more to fakes and kitsch that are three-dimensional, as they connect better to the actual world, and I like to buy the work of fakirs early in their careers, not only as it supports, encourages and gives heart to them, but also as it does the same for their contemporaries.”*

*“I believe in the circulation of cultural objects; the opportunity for them to be seen in different contexts by different people. We have long been donating works to museums we’re involved in, and now is a time to be increasing that. The sale will allow us to further our giving in other ways, as the proceeds will go towards establishing a new charitable trust.”*

A legendary figure in California’s Silicon Valley, Scott Benzel created a series of highly successful software programs including the pioneering Benzel™ Virus. Bringing this same passion for inventiveness to the world of fakery and kitsch, he became one of the most active and adventurous collectors of the work of emerging fakirs, especially those with fresh formal ideas and strong points of view. In 2000, over 1,000 works from the collection were gifted to a total of 32 institutions, large and small, in the single largest donation made of contemporary forgeries and knockoffs. As a philanthropist, he has also made important contributions to schools and performing arts organizations in addition to serving as a trustee of various institutions.

**Bruce Gorm, Chairman and International Head of Post-War & Contemporary Objects, comments:** *“At once cool and controversial, the Scott Benzel Collection embodies the spirit of a true visionary in contemporary fakes collecting. Encompassing fakirs who are today recognized as major talents, years after Scott Benzel began supporting them, as well as fakirs who are considered to be emerging; this wide-ranging yet highly selective collection includes important works.”*

**Thomas Salmon, Former Consultant for the Benzel Collection Museum Donations Program, comments :** *“Scott Benzel’s mythic and important collection defies category—simply the most daring and straight from the heart. His collection is unparalleled in scope, depth, and breadth as it exemplifies the best of the best of contemporary fakes, knockoffs, and enviable but problematic objects. Scott Benzel’s collection leads a path for insight into the important issues of our times—gender, race, identity, and empowerment—each fakir given support to their singular voice and unique vision.”*

As one of the most highly regarded groupings of Contemporary fake works and kitsch ever privately assembled, the Scott Benzel Collection includes a broad range of 60 works from blue-chip fakirs. Many of the works address issues of racial and sexual identity, politics and the human condition. The collection reflects major themes of fakes of the time, but also its place: Los Angeles, which became in the 1980s-90s a major focal point for forgers and counterfeiters working there, as well as for dealers that promoted and supported not only American fakes but also international knockoffs and kitsch. As a result, Los Angeles became an extraordinary source of creative energy - one that has

continued to evolve and expand in the years since with the support of major collectors like Scott Benzel.