

## **ROBERTS & TILTON**

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### *Scribble & Scripture*

Curated by Aaron Rose

February 15 - April 15, 2003

Barry McGee

Phil Frost

Thomas Campbell

The act of scribbling. Arguably the purest form of creative expression and often times the first manifestation of children's art. It is always a talisman of the subconscious, unpredictable, insane and undeniably authentic. Artists such as Twombly, Pollock and Basquiat understood the power of this method for eliciting energy and emotion. Thomas Campbell, Phil Frost and Barry McGee could be considered the torchbearers of this tradition for the current generation. All three are artists whose works have spawned from the culture of the street. Campbell from skateboarding, Frost and McGee from graffiti, all of which are erratic, dangerous and many times illegal acts. By necessity each of these artists has had to learn to act quickly to execute a gesture and achieve a desired effect. When this energy is harnessed and transferred into the context of works for the gallery the effect can become almost spiritual. Although none of these artists would profess to preach any religious dogma in their works, it cannot be denied that each has their own unique mantra. Thomas Campbell's multi-colored and layered canvases are filled with scrawled anecdotes such as "Be Here Now" or "Upchuck and Rejoice", lessons on the benefits of living in the moment and letting go of negative spiritual energies. Phil Frost's works, paintings and assemblages executed in a variety of materials are reminiscent of African and Aboriginal folk art and at times installations have been arranged in the form of alters to super heroes or mythological characters from the artist's mind. Barry McGee's multi media installations, which include everything from wall paintings and framed drawings and photographs to empty liquor bottles, contain iconography that owes much to Mexican and American Indian spiritual practices.

Architectural firm Otto Design Group will provide exhibition design, creating an entire environment including installation spaces and a small store selling inexpensively priced books, magazines, records, and other artists' ephemera. Scribble & Scripture will mark the major gallery debut in Los Angeles for all three artists.