

CONTEMPORARY TO ALLER SHOWS **Close** by Anna Bernat

Ray Johnson: how to draw a bunny Feigen Contemporary

It is the fate of all extreme, eccentric, unique and difficult genii who find themselves trapped in the New York art machine to be ignored until they die, preferably in unusual or amusing circumstances. Ray Johnson was a central marginal figure within the Manhattan art pack for many decades and his peculiar suicide was a strikingly, particularly redemptive one. Ever since Johnson took his cryptic leap off Sag Harbor bridge, his once-dormant legend has been back on full boil, fuelled by biographical curiosity and cult enigma. But as the show at Feigen Contemporary (until 26 October) makes clear, the real source of this revival is the straightforward excellence of the man's creative moves, from Mail Art to collage tricks, pop props to deadpan gags, a series of tiny tactical moves that with death coalesced into strategic master plan. This overflowing visual-verbal bonanza is entitled "How to draw a bunny", which is also the title of an exemplary documentary film on Johnson's impossibly oblique life and work which is playing at Film Forum in conjunction with the exhibition. Both are, of course, obligatory.