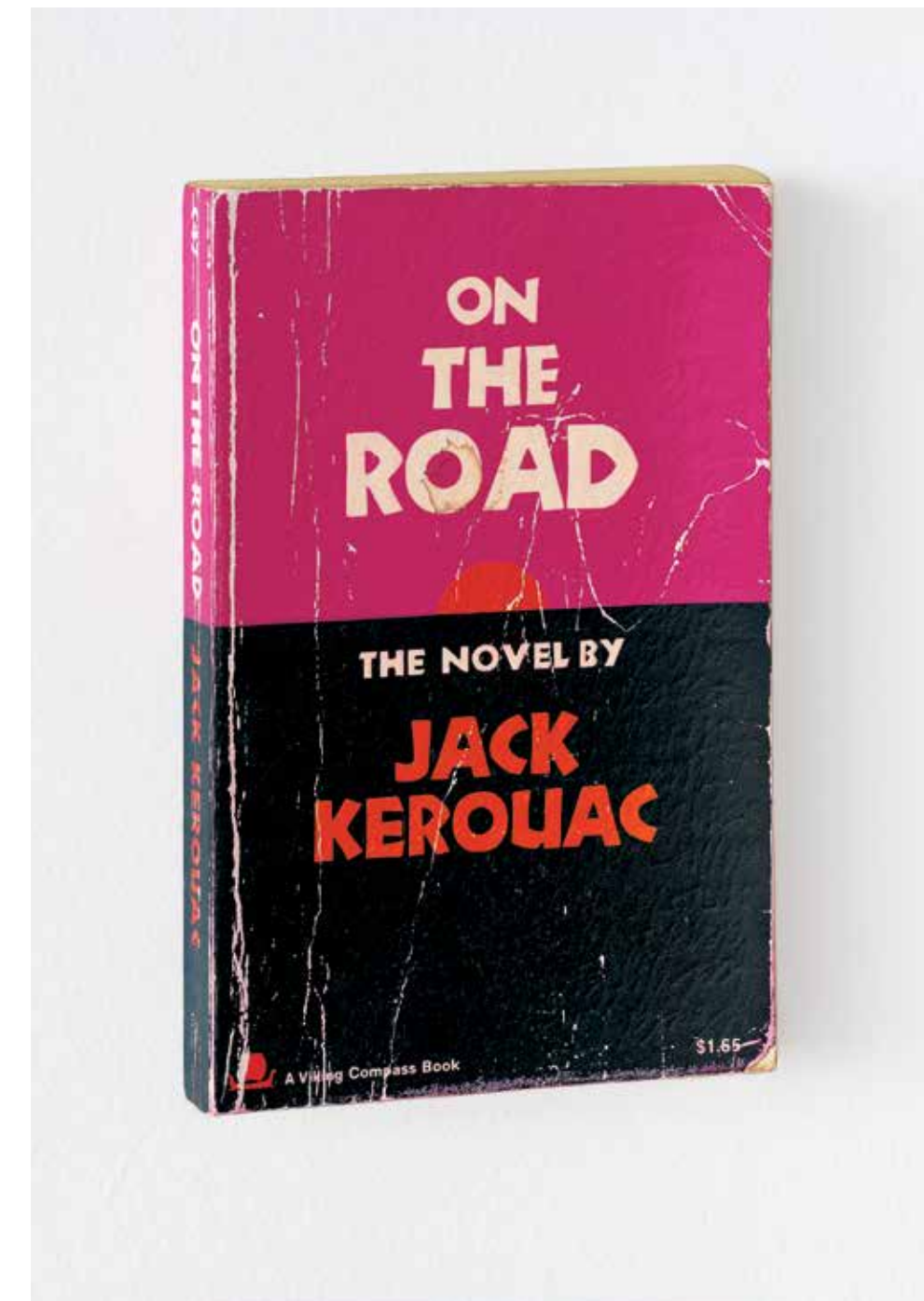
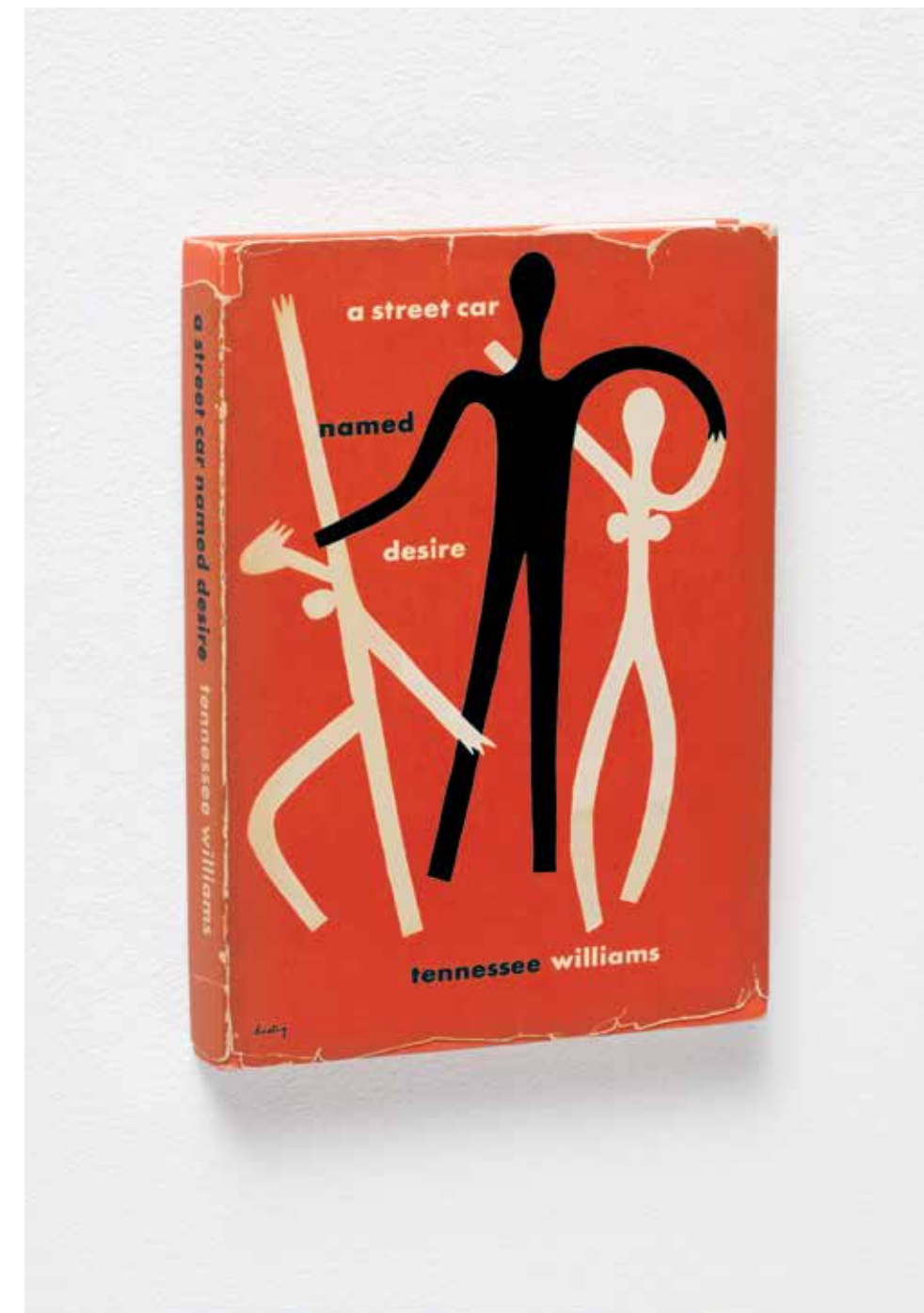
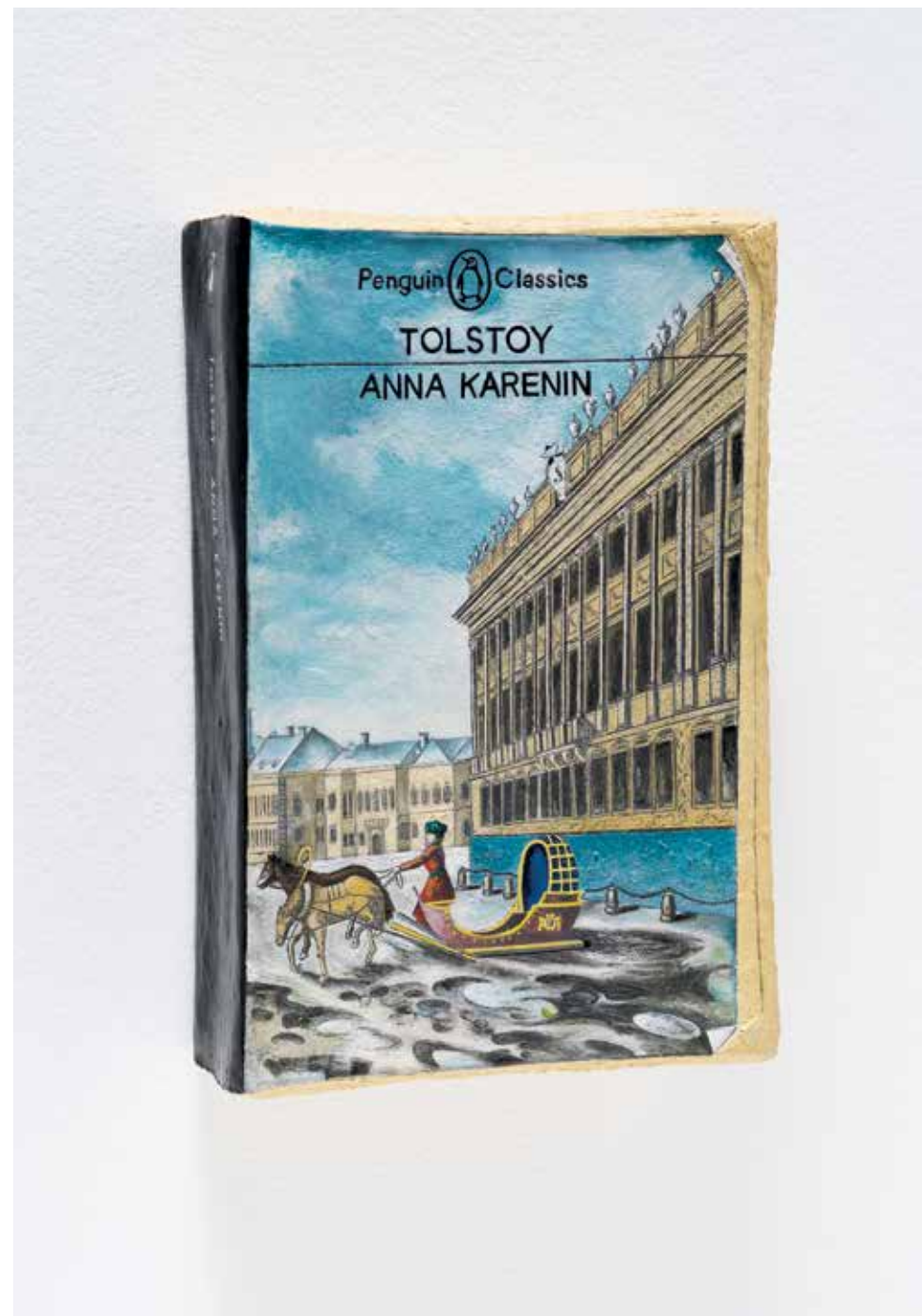


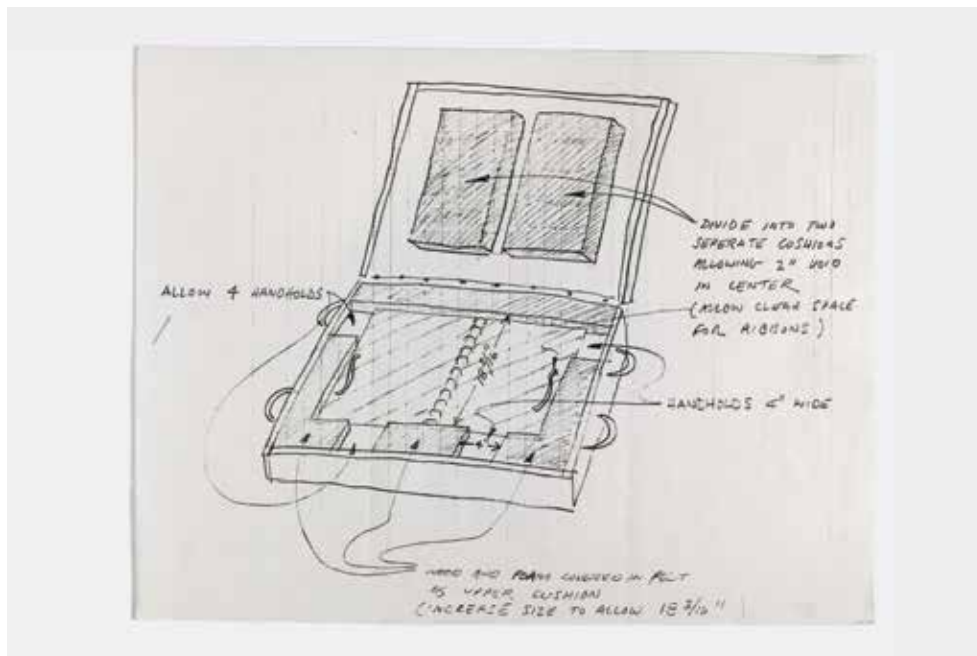
STEVE WOLFE
THE BRUTALITY OF FACT

September 7–October 19, 2024

LUHRING
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Luhring Augustine's Tribeca gallery is a fitting site for an exhibition of work by Steve Wolfe, as the location is near the address of his original studio. Known for his meticulously crafted reproductions of timeworn books, well-used vinyl records, and book-filled recycled cartons, Wolfe was at the center of the burgeoning downtown New York art scene of the 1980s. Working in the trompe-l'œil tradition, he made his detailed sculptural simulacra through a combination of techniques such as exacting drawings, screen printing, and metal casting. Another essential aspect of Wolfe's output are his works on paper, most of which are studies for his three-dimensional pieces.

Wolfe's practice was considered and labor intensive, and perhaps the most scrupulous aspect of his process was his choice of subject matter. The cultural artifacts that he selected to recreate reflect his own sensibilities, as well as those of his generation. Featuring Beat Generation and counter-culture provocateurs such as Jack Kerouac, musical icons like The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix, literary legends Truman Capote, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and Leo Tolstoy, as well as art world mainstays such as Piet Mondrian and Man Ray, the works in Wolfe's oeuvre represent some of the most important writers, artists, and thinkers of the 20th century. His works pointedly illustrate traces of the object's consumption in vivid detail – creases, folds, tears, bookmarks, stains, and scratches are the physical markings of the interaction that occurs when a book is read or a record is played.

It is significant that the tangible history of the objects Wolfe diligently captured were of his own making. The artist's library and archive served not only as source material, they were also a creative muse. Preserved to this day, this collection is an atlas of Wolfe's

interests, methodologies, values, friendships, inspirations, and passions. Alongside his personal book and record holdings, the artist's archive is an illuminating collection of handwritten diagrams and installation instructions, loose sketches, and detailed cross-hatched drawings. The materials are contained in notebooks and folders teeming with inserts, letters, photographs, torn-out magazine articles, as well as technical remnants of his process such as screen tests and bare woodblocks, which served as the bases for the sculptures.

Shown alongside Wolfe's "real" objects, the fabrication of his creations is laid bare. This revelation evokes questions surrounding truth and representation with implications beyond Wolfe's own body of work, speaking to the overall role of art and cultural production. The works of the artists and writers Wolfe references, in their original forms, are



part of a long tradition of culture building, knowledge dissemination, and speaking truth to power. This critical paradox, that reality can be understood through imagined worlds and created scenes, is at the core of Wolfe's project. As sculptures, the books and records enter a new canon, their meanings and the collective memory of their impact preserved in another context for current and future generations. A deep engagement with these replicated objects offers a way to navigate the often-blurred line between fact and fiction.

Recto, left to right: *Untitled (Anna Karenina)*, 1985–1987; *Untitled (A Streetcar Named Desire)*, 1996; *Untitled (On The Road)*, 1991–1992

Verso, left to right: *Untitled (Sketchbook 10F)*, 1990; Archive image, date unknown; Archive image, date unknown; *Untitled (The Beatles)*, 1992–1994