

Statement

The autographed baseball, from the artist's personal collection, *Joe Di Maggio: "The Touch of Greatness"*, is exhibited behind "The Hole", and is left for the viewers to touch and scroll. In this way, I feel the ball will be presented sacrificially. Much like the blanket piece functions-as a reflection of personal worth sacrificed, the ball functions as both personal and asset worth, being given up. Both pieces employ transformation to create a new entity, but while the blanket was a sacrificial performance, it was always protected by the pillow. Not so with the baseball. There is no protective casing. The piece is left naked and bare for the audience to touch, scroll, demarcate, and in effect destroy-with their fingers-the inherent worth of its object. Each time that piece is shown it will "collect" the finger prints of those wanting to touch greatness-some symbol of remarkable talent, or conversely non talent. By breaking the "religious" and taboo associations, the object as a collector's item, and as a piece of art in a gallery, becomes an item collecting as it is destroyed.

Playing on that further is the title, "The Touch of Greatness". While obviously referent to the greatness of the ball player Joe Di Maggio, and the achievements he made as reflected through the autographed objects, there is the corollary relationship to the myth of Midas, and his golden touch. What will touching the object and or the greatness of the object do for the viewer? How much is luck, how much is learned in baseball and/or art, to maintain understanding and concrete achievement. Is the golden touch innate or achieved, or will this so called "golden touch" be the demise of its possessor as it was with Midas, until there is the mythological and proverbial washing of the hands. Finally, the piece questions the inevitable breakdown between the inherent caste systems and hierarchies of the art world, the sports world, and even the commercial Hollywood world, both of the object and ultimately autograph. Almost as an afterthought, a bio for Joe Di Maggio, appears with the artist's bio - as a comparison in fact with real achievements, collectively of the art world and in particular the artists in the show, with those already attained by the sports hall of famer.

Devon Dikeou

The Touch of Greatness 1994 ongoing

THE HOLE-Postmasters
NY