



seriously funny

on view through MAY 24, 2009

Nina Katchadourian, *Monument to the Unelected*

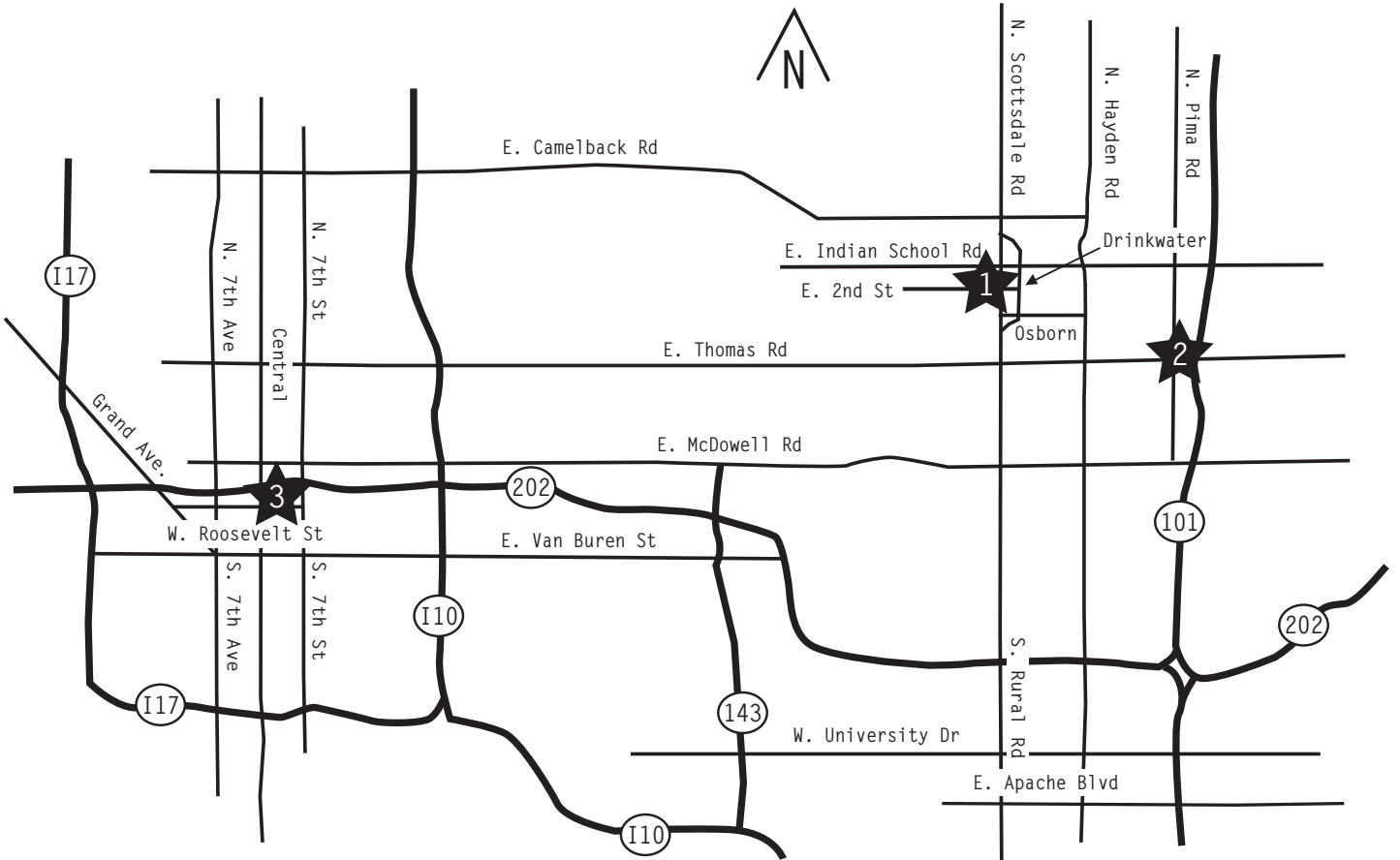
Created especially for the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art's 10th Anniversary exhibition, *Seriously Funny*, Nina Katchadourian's installation *Monument to the Unelected* takes the form of signs resembling those typically displayed on street corners in the Phoenix Metro area during political campaigns. However, Katchadourian's signs pop up anachronistically in February when no election is taking place. The 56 signs on two different sites display the names of all the candidates who have ever lost an American presidential election.

Monument to the Unelected traces a forgotten or potentially alternative historical lineage. The work's temporary nature calls attention to our collective short-term historical memory and pokes fun at its own proposed monumentality. Katchadourian points out that "there are many names on the signs that will be utterly unfamiliar; there are also candidates who are very well-known because they did become president later, or because they had been president but ran again unsuccessfully. In many different ways, the project plays with the blank spots in our knowledge of American history."

As the work honors the "could have beens," it also reminds us of the huge role advertising plays in election campaigns today. The signs look contemporary so as to address the unique design style and language typical of signs like these. The artist explains that "collectively, the signs communicate something about our aesthetic and our understanding of what is implied by a certain kind of font or typeface." The juxtaposition of a name like Aaron Burr that might conjure a vague memory from American history class with contemporary graphic treatment creates an experience of a time warp. Katchadourian aims to get viewers to do a double take, to catch themselves taking for granted the details of the everyday and maybe learn a little something about America history in the process.

The piece is located at two sites in the valley: a front lawn on Thomas Road west of Pima Road in Scottsdale and a vacant lot on Roosevelt Street at 5th Street in downtown Phoenix. These sites represent the different contexts in which one might typically find election signs. They also offer different ways for people to experience the works—by foot or car.

[over]



★ 1 SMoCA
7380 East 2nd St
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

★ 2 8607 East Thomas Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
[Thomas Road West of Pima Road]

★ 3 East Roosevelt St & North 5th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Monument to the Unelected will be on view from February 13 through May 24, 2009, along with the rest of the exhibition *Seriously Funny* at SMoCA.



For more information,
visit www.smoca.org.

SMoCA thanks Leigh and John Hersey, Eric Brown and Greg Esser for supporting this project and collaborating with us to host it. The signs were designed by Evan Gaffney of Evan Gaffney Design; we thank him as well as historical advisors Professor David Kennedy and Professor Sean Wilentz. Our gratitude also extends to Brent Bond and Segura Publishing Company for their hard work and generosity in printing the signs, as well as our fantastic installation team: Jennifer Brandon, Nick DeFord, Sally Gilmore and Ryan Miller.