

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street
New York, NY 10021
whitney.org/press

Tel. (212) 570-3633
Fax (212) 570-4169
pressooffice@whitney.org

Press Release

Contact:
Whitney Museum of American Art
Stephen Soba, Leily Soleimani
212-570-3633

THE WHITNEY PRESENTS FIRST IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ARTIST STEVE WOLFE'S WORKS ON PAPER

September 30 – November 29, 2009



Steve Wolfe (b.1955), *Untitled (Study for Eggplant/Gateway 2000 Cartons)*, 1996-97. Oil, screenprint, lithography, and modeling paste on two sheets of paper, 28 15/16 x 51 1/8 in. (73.5 x 129.9 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Drawing Committee 98.10.2a-b

NEW YORK, July 28, 2009 – For more than two decades, Steve Wolfe (b. 1955) has created objects and drawings that explore the intersections between material culture, intellectual history, and personal and collective memory. This exhibition, Wolfe's first solo museum show, comprises thirty works drawn from the artist's innovative body of works on paper, some purely drawn, but many combining drawing, painting, collage, and printmaking. A collaboration between the Whitney Museum and the Menil Collection, the exhibition is co-organized by Carter Foster, the Whitney's curator of drawings, and Franklin Sirmans, curator of modern and contemporary art at the Menil. *Steve Wolfe on Paper* opens September 30 and runs

through November 29, 2009, in the Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz Lobby Gallery. The show will then travel to the Menil Collection, Houston, April 2 – October 31, 2010.

Working in the tradition of *trompe l'oeil*, Wolfe makes pieces that often quite literally fool the eye on inspection. What appear to be tattered books, worn covers, and used vinyl records are in fact objects made from modeling paste, screen printing, graphite, and various other techniques, meticulously produced to convey the mark of time and handling. The tears, creases, and basic wear point to human contact. This exhibition focuses on Wolfe's works on paper, and "Steve Wolfe on Paper," the title selected by Wolfe himself, is not only a *double entendre* referring to both his technique and subject—since Wolfe's work often depicts paper in the form of books—but also implies Wolfe's commitment to the material and the handmade in the face of the electronic age and the potential obsolescence of the culture of the book and the written word. Book covers have been the primary subject of Wolfe's art and his renderings of particular covers relating to moments of his life may be seen as a self-portrait of the artist and of his generation.

As Carter Foster, Whitney curator and co-organizer of the exhibition, explains: "Wolfe invests his creations with both personal history and personal touch: an almost erotic representation of the fact that one can fall in love with that which is ephemeral (ideas, music). Wolfe's transformation of common objects requires the viewer to re-think what they mean as such."

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a 96-page catalogue containing 30 full-color plates, in-depth essays by co-curators Carter E. Foster and Franklin Sirmans; a selected exhibition history and bibliography, and index. Published by the Whitney in collaboration with the Menil Collection, this is the first museum publication on Wolfe and his significant place in post-war American art. Support for this catalogue was provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Roland Augustine and Lawrence Luhring, and Gail and Tony Ganz.

Significant support for this exhibition is provided by Marguerite Steed Hoffman.

About the Artist

Steve Wolfe was born in Pisa, Italy, in 1955 and lives and works in San Francisco, California. A graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, Wolfe has been the recipient of American Academy of Arts and Letters Award (2000). Wolfe exhibited most recently at the Whitney as part of **2D→3D** (2007).

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today. First housed on West 8th Street, the Whitney relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and in 1966 inaugurated its present home at 945 Madison Avenue, designed by Marcel Breuer. The Whitney is currently moving ahead with plans to build a second facility, designed by Renzo Piano, located in downtown New York at the entrance to the High Line in the Meatpacking District.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Oldenburg/van Bruggen	Through September 6, 2009
Sadie Benning: Play Pause	Through September 20, 2009
Photoconceptualism, 1966-1973	Through September 20, 2009
Dan Graham: Beyond	Through October 11, 2009
Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction	September 17, 2009-January 17, 2010
Steve Wolfe on Paper	September 30-November 29, 2009
Roni Horn aka Roni Horn	November 6, 2009-January 24, 2010
Alice Guy Blaché: Cinema Pioneer	November 6, 2009-January 24, 2010

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$15 for adults; Members, children (ages 11 and under), and New York City public high school students free. Senior citizens (62 and over) and students with valid ID: \$10. There is a \$6 admission fee for a pass to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6-9 pm. For information, please call 212-570-3600 or visit whitney.org