

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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***NOSTALGIA*, BY BUCKSBAUM AWARD-WINNER OMER FAST, RECEIVES NEW YORK DEBUT AT THE WHITNEY**



Nostalgia III (production still), 2009

Super 16mm film transferred to high-definition video, color, sound; 32:48 minutes

Photograph by Thierry Bal; courtesy gb agency, Paris; Postmasters, New York; and Arratia, Beer, Berlin.

NEW YORK, November 18, 2009 – *Omer Fast: Nostalgia* is a new three-part film and video installation that continues Fast's fascination with exploring configurations of fact and fiction through narrative and filmic constructions, intertwining modes of documentary and dramatization. In this exhibition, organized by Tina Kukielski, senior curatorial assistant, the

work receives its New York debut at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where it will be seen from December 10, 2009, through February 14, 2010. It is presented as part of the 2008 Bucksbaum Award, conferred on Fast for significant contributions to the visual arts in the United States. Endowed by Whitney Trustee Melva Bucksbaum and her family, the Bucksbaum Award is given every two years to an artist chosen from the Museum's Biennial exhibition. (The next recipient will be selected from among the artists in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, which opens to the public on February 25.)

Nostalgia (2009) begins with a fragment from an interview between the artist and an African refugee seeking asylum in London, during which the artist/interviewer is told how the refugee built a trap for catching a partridge back home in his native Nigeria. Themes of cultural and geographical dislocation fall against a backdrop that seamlessly distorts a sense of time, blending past, present, and future in each of the three parts of *Nostalgia*. The installation itself becomes a metaphor for the traps of storytelling, history, and memory, the experience of making our own truths and building our own identities from these truths.

Fast (b. 1972) tracks individual stories in the midst of larger social or historical circumstances/situations, in this case immigration and asylum. His earlier works include *Spielberg's List* (2003), a video installation in which the artist visited Krakow, the city in Poland that served as the setting for Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, and interviewed city residents who had worked as extras on the film. In *Godville* (2005), the artist interviewed costumed performers at the Colonial Williamsburg living-history museum in Virginia; they describe the lives of their eighteenth-century characters and their own personal lives in ways that seem interchangeable. In *The Casting* (2007), shown in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Fast, appearing as himself, interviews a young American army sergeant who recounts two stories, which seem to be his own anguished memories, one about dating a woman while stationed in Germany, and the other of accidentally killing a civilian in Iraq. These two narrative strands are blended as if they had become inextricable in the mind of the narrator.

Writing in *The Washington Post* at the time of the showing of *The Casting* in the 2008 Biennial, Blake Gopnik singled out the work as one of the exhibition's best: "It's no news to anyone that the stories that we tell about ourselves and our times are mostly built from fragments and imaginings. But I can't think of any artist who has managed to depict ... the realities of that construction as subtly, as convincingly, or as engrossingly as Fast."

About the Artist

Omer Fast was born in Jerusalem and currently lives in Berlin. His work has been shown at the Whitney in the 2002 and 2008 Biennials. In addition to receiving the Whitney's Bucksbaum Award in 2008, he won the Nationalgalerie Prize for Young Art in 2009. Solo exhibitions include UC Berkeley Art Museum; South London Gallery, UK; Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel; Lunds Konsthall, Sweden; Kunstverein Hannover; and the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna. This fall his work is being featured in New York in Performa 09. Fast received his M.F.A. from Hunter College of the City University of New York. Fast's work has entered the collections of many museums, including the Whitney, the Guggenheim, Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof, the Hirshhorn, the Metropolitan Museum, the Tate, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He has been included in group exhibitions most recently at ZKM, Karlsruhe; Liverpool Biennial 2008; Manifesta 7; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. This is Fast's first solo museum exhibition in New York.

About The Bucksbaum Award

Melva Bucksbaum, a Whitney trustee since 1996, launched The Bucksbaum Award in 2000. In addition to Omer Fast, the previous recipients are Paul Pfeiffer (2000), Irit Batsry (2002), Raymond Pettibon (2004), and Mark Bradford (2006). The Bucksbaum Award, created and produced by Tiffany & Co., is given every two years in recognition of an artist, chosen from those included in the Biennial, whose work demonstrates a singular combination of talent and imagination. The selected artist is considered by the jurors to have the potential to make a lasting impact on the history of American art, based on the excellence of past work as well as present work in the Biennial. In addition to receiving a \$100,000 grant, each Bucksbaum laureate is invited to present an exhibition at the Whitney, sometime within the succeeding two years.

Major support for *Omer Fast: Nostalgia* is provided by an endowment from the Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation.

Additional support comes from the Office of Cultural Affairs, Consulate General of Israel in New York.

Nostalgia was co-produced by South London Gallery; the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; and the Verein der Freunde der Nationalgalerie, Berlin. It is currently receiving its West Coast premiere at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, in Berkeley, CA.

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 and Coosje van Bruggen, 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:

Steve Wolfe on Paper	Through November 29, 2009
A Few Frames: Photography and the Contact Sheet	Through January 3, 2010
Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction	Through January 17, 2010
Roni Horn aka Roni Horn	Through January 24, 2010
Alice Guy Blaché: Cinema Pioneer	Through January 24, 2010
Omer Fast: Nostalgia	December 10, 2009-February 14, 2010
2010 Biennial	February 25-May 30, 2010
Heat Waves in a Swamp: The Paintings of Charles Burchfield	Opens June 24, 2010

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, 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. General admission: \$18. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$12. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only: \$6. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.