

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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Press Preview:
Tuesday, June 26, 2007
10am to 12pm

WHITNEY MUSEUM TO PRESENT *RUDOLF STINGEL* June 28-October 14, 2007



Image: *Untitled (after Sam)*, 2006. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Gift of Katherine S. Schamberg by exchange.
Photo courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Rudolf Stingel, the first major museum exhibition in the United States of the work of the renowned international artist Rudolf Stingel, goes on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art from June 28 to October 14, 2007. Organized by Manilow Senior Curator at Large Francesco Bonami for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (MCA), this twenty-year survey, covering Stingel's work from 1987 to 2007, takes a comprehensive look at an influential contemporary artist whose work seeks to demystify notions of

the artist, the artistic process, and the art object. The New York installation is being overseen by the Whitney's Anne and Joel Ehrenkrantz Curator Chrissie Iles.

Employing a wide-ranging palette of unconventional materials that includes carpet, rubber, painted aluminum, and Styrofoam, Stingel reflects upon some of the fundamental questions facing painting today: authenticity, meaning, hierarchy, and context. By transforming the process and perception of paintings, Stingel's work alters the viewer's physical encounter with the artwork, and invites participation in a new and deeper understanding and appreciation of art. When Stingel carpeted New York's Grand Central Station in 2004, and later covered a lobby floor with a vivid orange rug in *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye* at the MCA in 2005, he transformed the spaces into works of art that visitors needed to occupy to experience. Stingel remarked, "This had all the intellectual qualities that I ask from a painting. It's aggressive, it's against the system, it's against the usual way of doing a painting. Once in a while, it's good to freshen up the air with these kinds of things."

Curator Francesco Bonami notes, "Stingel consistently aims to redefine what painting can be, what it has been, and what it is." Bonami has followed Stingel's progress over the decades and has included his work in four previous exhibitions at the MCA: *Examining Pictures: Exhibiting Paintings* (1999), *Age of Influence: Reflections in the Mirror of American Culture* (2000), *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye* (2005), and *Figures in the Field: Figurative Sculpture and Abstract Painting from Chicago Collections* (2006).

Stingel's full range of work, including his recent portraits and self portraits, are represented in this career survey, along with new site-specific installations created for each venue. At the MCA, the central atrium has an enormous, ornate chandelier centerpiece with an eight-foot diameter with glass and Czech crystal created by New Metal Crafts, Chicago. Stingel has covered all of the front atrium lobby walls with silver panels that visitors can write on or cut into, altering the work over the course of the exhibition. When Stingel originally showed his silver paintings he found that visitors repeatedly scrawled on them, so he pushed the idea further, challenging visitors to question their ideas about surfaces that invite graffiti. Stingel takes the language of public rest rooms, bus stops, and underpasses and puts them into a museum setting, undermining the space and people's perception of painting.

Playing with notions of art and decoration, Stingel often places on the wall what is typically found on the floor, and vice versa. Similar to the way that he may install a carpet on the wall of an exhibition space, Stingel hangs large-scale panels of Styrofoam, some with surfaces that depict deep footprints. To make these Styrofoam works, Stingel steps in acid and then walks across and marks the surface. Both the carpets and the Styrofoam works document the physical interaction between the work and human contact, either by the artist or visitors.

Stingel has produced various bodies of work over the past twenty years that highlight his highly original process of creating art, but the unifying theme of the exhibition is the artist's connection with painting. Although he has worked and lived in New York City since 1987 when he left Italy, Stingel continues a European relation to the history of painting that he both parodies and glorifies in the process of his dissection.

For the most recent body of work in the exhibition, Stingel has been focusing on enormous photorealistic portraits and self-portraits. Included in the 2006 Whitney Biennial, Stingel's self portraits show a dark, melancholic side of the state of mind of the Western artist. These self-referential paintings manage to both question and celebrate the artistic process at once, with a humor and beauty that can also be subversive.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, *Rudolf Stingel*, with essays by Francesco Bonami, MCA Manilow Senior Curator at Large; Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art; and Reiner Zettl, Assistant Professor at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria. The catalogue provides a comprehensive look at Stingel's work which seeks to demystify the artist, the artistic process, and the art object. His full range of work, including his recent portraits and self portraits, are represented in this handsome volume. *Rudolf Stingel* is the first book to examine the broader implications of the artist's creative practice in contemporary society. Published in association with the MCA Chicago. 9 1/2 x 11 3/4 in, 256 pages, 90 color illustrations, \$55.00, hardcover.

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Rudolf Stingel was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Major support for Rudolf Stingel is provided by the Harris Family Foundation in memory of Bette and Neison Harris. Generous support is also provided by Nancy and Sanfred Koltun, Anne and Ken Griffin, Neil G. Bluhm, Anne and Burt Kaplan, and Helen and Sam Zell. Additional support is provided by Sara Szold, Andrea and Jim Gordon, J. Ira and Nicki Harris Family Foundation, Frances Dittmer Family Foundation, Stefan Edlis and H. Gael Neeson, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura Chicago, and Bert A. Lies, Jr. MD and Rosina Lee Yue, and David Teiger.

ABOUT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM

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, Louise Nevelson, and Lucas Samaras, 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.

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

Lights, Camera, Action: Artists' Films for the Cinema	Through April 1, 2007
2D →3D	Through April 22, 2007
Gordon Matta-Clark Films & Videos	April 4-29, 2007
Uncontained	Through April 29, 2007
Lorna Simpson	Through May 6, 2007
Terence Koh	Through May 27, 2007
Gordon Matta-Clark	Through June 3, 2007
Taryn Simon	Through June 24, 2007
Lincoln Kirstein	Opens April 25, 2007
Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era	May 24-September 16, 2007
Rudolf Stingel	June 28-October 14, 2007
Kara Walker	October 11, 2007-Feb. 3, 2008
Lawrence Weiner	Opens November 15, 2007
Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster	February 23-April 27, 2008
2008 Whitney Biennial	Opens March 2008

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. For information, please call 1-800 WHITNEY or visit www.whitney.org

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

Matthew Brannon	Opens March 29, 2007
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The Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria is located at 120 Park Avenue at 42nd Street. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursdays 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sculpture Court Hours: Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sundays and holidays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Whitney Museum at Altria is funded by Altria Group, Inc. Admission is free. Free gallery talks are offered every Wednesday and Friday at 1:00 p.m. For further information, please call (917) 663-2453.

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