

# WHITNEY

## Press Release

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### **MORGAN FISHER RETROSPECTIVE TO OPEN AT THE WHITNEY November 30-February 12, 2006**



**Morgan Fisher**, still from *Standard Gauge*, 1984

16mm film, color, sound, 35 min. Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Vienna

A key figure in the Los Angeles art and film scenes since the 1970s, Morgan Fisher is the subject of a retrospective of film works opening November 30 at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The exhibition includes a rare showing of Fisher's film installation *Color Balance* (1980, remade in 2002), as well as nine films, made from 1968 to 2003, that reflect Fisher's dual interest in maintaining a critical relationship to Hollywood cinema while exploring the materials and structures of film. *Standard Gauge: Film Works by Morgan Fisher 1968-2003* remains on view through February 12, 2006.

The exhibition is organized by Whitney curator Chrissie Iles, who notes, "Fisher's early films are all constructed according to Conceptual, or 'structural' principles rather than narrative sequences, reflecting the shift away from conventional narrative and readings of sculptural and painterly space, materials, and time that were occurring elsewhere in the art world at the beginning of the 1970s."

In *Color Balance*, three projectors superimpose identical images of a constantly moving Ping-Pong ball, filtered red, green, and blue. The installation enacts additive color mixing, but the projectors are not synchronized, resulting in an ever-changing play of primary colors.

*Production Stills* (1970) uses the equipment of Hollywood studio filmmaking to document its own production with a series of Polaroids whose repeated shape recalls the uniform modules used by Carl Andre and Donald Judd.

*Projection Instructions* (1976) tells the projectionist to do such things as turn off the sound and throw the image out of focus, acts that ordinarily would be disruptive. These actions by the projectionist connect the screen and the viewer back to an invisible performer attending to the invisible machine that is the origin of the image.

Fisher, a friend of the late artist Jack Goldstein, addressed Hollywood most directly in *Standard Gauge* (1984). An autobiography mainly about Fisher's brief time as a film editor in Hollywood, the film presents scraps of found footage as a series of objects that reflect the history and technical aspects of the commercial motion picture industry, while also alluding to Fisher's peers in independent filmmaking such as Paul Sharits and Hollis Frampton.

In Fisher's most recent film ( ), insert shots taken from Hollywood films (for example, a close-up of a wristwatch) are "liberated" from their original, marginal role as conveyors of information essential to their stories, and given a central role, reassembled to form a chance succession of enigmatic, sometimes ominous, moments.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Morgan Fisher (born 1942) lives and works in Santa Monica. Fisher has recently exhibited a group of paintings at Adamski in Aachen, Germany, and a series of mirror works called "The Aspect Ratio Pieces" at Greene Naftali Gallery in New York. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

## **ABOUT THE WHITNEY**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-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 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:***

Owen Land	November 2-27, 2005
Richard Tuttle	November 10, 2005-February 5, 2006
Course of Empire: Paintings by Ed Ruscha	November 17, 2005-January 29, 2006
Morgan Fisher	November 30, 2005-February 12, 2006
Building and Breaking the Grid, 1962-2002	Through January 8, 2006
The New City: Sub/Urbia in Recent Photography	Through January 15, 2006
Oscar Bluemner: A Passion for Color	Through February 12, 2006
Raymond Pettibon	Through February 19, 2006
2006 Biennial	March 2-May 28, 2006
Permanent Collection: 75th Anniversary Exhibition	June-September 2006
Picasso and American Art	September 28, 2006-January 28, 2007
Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980-2005	November 16, 2006-February 11, 2007

*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](http://www.whitney.org)*

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

Rob Fischer	Through January 22, 2006
Andrea Zittel: Wagon Stations	February 9 – May 7, 2006

*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.*