

WHITNEY

Press Release

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October 2005

WHITNEY AT ALTRIA TO OPEN ROB FISCHER

Through January 22, 2006



Rob Fischer, 2005, Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, Installation View
Collection of the artist; courtesy Cohan and Leslie, New York

From October 27, 2005 to January 22, 2006, the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria presents a new commissioned project by Brooklyn-based artist Rob Fischer. Drawing deeply on the vernacular forms and architecture of his native Minnesota in his sculptural installations, painted photographs and paintings, Fischer addresses the tension between transience and memory and the specifics of site. The project, his most ambitious to date, will occupy both the Gallery and the Sculpture Court at the Whitney Museum at Altria. This exhibition has been organized by Shamim M. Momin, Associate Curator, Whitney Museum of America Art, and Branch Director and Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria.

The central component of Rob Fischer will be a spiraling, 30-foot sculptural assemblage comprised of Fischer's characteristic forms— semi-abstracted closets, hallway sections, and blank rooms— reminiscent of the mud-brick ancient Tower of Babel. The biblical story of the Tower of Babel, a parable warning against man's hubris, functions as a broader metaphor for the show over all, which explores the ideas of ambition, failure, humility, and human will. Engaging historical myths such as

Icarus' disastrous flight towards the sun, the other sculptural elements of the installation incorporate modified structures of transience and mobility— a boat hull, a sleeper cab from a truck, inverted dumpsters re-formed in glass and mirrors that become altars and monuments— as well as increasingly abstracted constructions of sheetrock and floorboards.

The work moves towards increasingly psychologically fraught assemblages that are both comfortingly familiar and yet disturbingly divorced from their assumed function or form. Made of industrial materials like steel and glass, the sculptures remain utilitarian and intensely personal. Delicately balanced between the specific and intimate idea of an individual history, Rob Fischer also references a more universal sense of time, place, and desire—ideas of achievement, mobility, transience, romanticism and failure. Fischer refers to his work as 'footnotes to a larger story,' allowing the central narrative to remain ever-fluid, reshaped and configured by the space and the viewer's interaction with it. Focusing instead on the oft-unseen traces that we all leave behind, he explores the futility of life's endeavors and the absurdity of human existence, while celebrating the extraordinary beauty of the messy, chaotic attempt that gives our lives significance.

Fischer's installations are largely reconstructed and modified on site, a practice that reflects the ever-changing, recyclable nature of his work. Taken from past works of art, or excavated from his studio and adjacent yard, each reassembled work references the artist's day-to-day life and studio practice. Though usually associated with discrete sculptural construction, his practice extends to painted photographs, paintings on canvas, video, and even site-specific "earthworks," the systemic continuity of which will be uniquely highlighted in the Whitney presentation. Fischer's hybrid sculptures are often amalgamations of parts with seemingly discordant functions, repeatedly built up, reconfigured and broken down into increasingly minimal, formally precise structures. For the 2004 Whitney Biennial, Fischer created 30 Yards (Minor Tragedies), a large scale dumpster recast in glass and containing an assemblage of architectural and domestic objects, forming both a formal composition as well as a record of memory of the failures, successes and choices that one makes every moment of their life and that ultimately, determine their identity.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1968 in Minneapolis, MN, Rob Fischer received his B.F.A from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, and has exhibited his work in solo exhibitions at venues including Cohan and Leslie, New York, NY; Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Madison Art Center, Madison, WI; Conductor's Hallway Gallery, London, UK; and Art in General,

New York, NY. His work has also been featured in several group exhibitions including Greater New York at PS1; Open House: Working in Brooklyn at the Brooklyn Museum of Art; Project Spaces at Artists Space, New York; Interval at the Sculpture Center, NY; Three Suitcases at Art and Idea, Mexico City; and Sculpture On Site at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. He has also received, among others, the 1999 Bush Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship, Minneapolis, 1999 Residency from Art in General, New York, and the 1996 Minnesota State Arts Board Visual Arts Fellowship.

Rob Fischer is accompanied by a free brochure with an essay by curator Shamim M. Momin.

A free artist talk with Rob Fischer will take place on Tuesday, November 15th at 6:30 pm. Free gallery talks are offered every Wednesday and Friday at 1:00 p.m.

The Whitney Museum at Altria is funded by Altria Group, Inc.

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.

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