

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

555 WEST 24TH STREET

NEW YORK NY 10011

GALLERY HOURS:

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Tuesday – Saturday: 10:00am–6:00pm

WILLEM DE KOONING: *A Centennial Exhibition*

Saturday, April 24 – Saturday, June 19, 2004

Opening reception: April 24th, 6:00 – 8:00pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Willem de Kooning (1904-1997). Held in celebration of what would have been the artist's one hundredth birthday on April 24th, the exhibition highlights five decades of the prolific artist's career. The project has been curated by David Whitney, an independent curator who has authored books on Jasper Johns, David Salle, and Andy Warhol.

The selection of thirty-nine paintings documents de Kooning's stylistic transition during the years 1946 through 1988. Focused on the artist's abstraction, the exhibition brings together the Surrealist-influenced compositions of the 1940s, the landscapes of the 1950s and 1960s, the gestural paintings of the 1970s, and the luminous canvases of the 1980s. Such a grouping reveals de Kooning's continual fascination with color and natural light, as well as the means by which the artist, who called himself a "slipping glimpser", managed to incorporate representations of the surrounding world into even his most abstract works. The exhibition, which has been organized with the full support of the de Kooning Trust and Foundation, features loans from private collections as well as museums, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Princeton University Art Museum, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Born in Rotterdam, de Kooning arrived in the United States in 1926 via Hoboken, where he worked as a housepainter. After his move to New York the following year, the artist quickly became part of the city's vibrant art scene, forging friendships with artists and critics such as Arshile Gorky, Thomas Hess, Robert Motherwell, and Harold Rosenberg. In 1963, de Kooning took up full-time residence on the east end of Long Island, New York, a rural location that significantly impacted his painting from that point forward. De Kooning's work has been the subject of numerous museum retrospectives, including those organized by the Museum of Modern Art (1968), the Whitney Museum of American Art (1983), and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (1994). His paintings from the 1980s were the subject of an exhibition that opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1995.

A fully illustrated catalogue will contain essays by Richard Schiff, Chair of the Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin; former Stedelijk Museum Director Edy de Wilde; and de Kooning's former studio assistant, Tom Ferrara. The catalogue will also feature previously published interviews with the artist.

For further information, please contact the gallery.

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