

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

6-24 BRITANNIA STREET

LONDON WC1X 9JD

GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue – Sat 10:00am– 6:00pm



FRANCESCO CLEMENTE: *Self Portraits*

Thursday, 8 December 2005 – Saturday, 28 January 2006

Opening reception for the artist: Wednesday, December 7th, 6 – 8pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Francesco Clemente. The exhibition will feature fourteen large-scale self portraits, together with a smaller group of pastels on paper. This will be Francesco Clemente's first exhibition in London since 2002.

In this collection of work Clemente returns to a theme he has explored throughout his career – the self portrait. Art is often about the artist confronting himself. Concerns with ways of seeing, with aging and death, with the ego and the superego are themes explored throughout art history, from Dürer through Velasquez and Kahlo. Francesco Clemente consciously picks up on these, fusing his images into an extremely personal mythology, while at the same time commenting on issues of tradition, imagination, and the significance of antiquity and modernity.

The artist depicts himself awake or in dreams, his body is exaggerated or misshapen, transmuting between human and animal, male and female. Painted in vibrant tropical colours, the paintings draw from diverse cultural periods and stylistic sources. Elements, senses and symbols filter through these works and weave together details drawn from Indian folk history and popular culture, as well as Western cultural tradition. These self portraits, suggest that not only does one subject have many forms, but also that the history, culture and religion that define each place where Clemente has lived, has accumulated in the artist's memory. Francesco Clemente reveals that to render a so-called 'true' interpretation of the self, is perhaps an impossible task.

Born in 1952 in Naples, Francesco Clemente has lived in New York for 25 years, while working for extended periods in Madras, India. He works in many different media, including oil, pastel, watercolour, fresco, sculpture and printed books. The artist has collaborated with several poets including Robert Creeley and Allen Ginsberg. Clemente has exhibited at numerous museums worldwide, including *Clemente*, a retrospective at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (1999), which traveled to Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2000).

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany this exhibition, which will include an essay by Salman Rushdie.

For further information or press inquiries please contact the gallery.