

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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DAMIEN HIRST: 'A Thousand Years' & Triptychs

Tuesday, 20 June – Friday, 4 August 2006

Opening reception for the artist: Tuesday, June 20th, 6 – 8pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of works by Damien Hirst. Included in the exhibition is the seminal vitrine, *A Thousand Years* (1990), and four triptychs: paintings, medicine cabinets and a new formaldehyde work entitled *The Tranquility of Solitude (For George Dyer)*, influenced by Francis Bacon.

A Thousand Years, one of Hirst's most provocative and engaging works, contains an actual life cycle. Maggots hatch inside a white minimal box, turn into flies, then feed on a bloody, severed cow's head on the floor of a claustrophobic glass vitrine. Above, hatched flies buzz around in the closed space. Many meet a violent end in an insect-o-cutor; others survive to continue the cycle. *A Thousand Years* was admired by Francis Bacon, who in a letter to a friend a month before he died, wrote about the experience of seeing the work at the Saatchi Gallery in London. Margarita Cappock notes that 'It is as if Bacon, a painter with no direct heir in that medium, was handing the baton on to a new generation.' Hirst has openly acknowledged his debt to Bacon, absorbing the painter's visceral images and obsessions early on and giving them concrete existence in sculptural form with works like *A Thousand Years*.

In works such as *The Tranquility of Solitude (For George Dyer)* (2006) and *Like Flies Brushed off a Wall, We Fall* (2006), Hirst continues his enduring preoccupation with the fundamental issues of life, death and the human condition. With his varied unflinching, fatalistic and darkly humorous view of existence, Hirst has continued to push the boundaries of art, science, the media and popular culture, to become one of the most influential artists of our time.

Damien Hirst: A Thousand Years & Triptychs is presented concurrently with the exhibition *Francis Bacon: Triptychs* in the adjoining galleries.

Damien Hirst was born in Bristol, England in 1965 and attended Goldsmiths College. In 1989, he curated *Freeze*, a benchmark exhibition for British art, and was awarded the Turner Prize in 1995. A survey of works from 1989-2004 was recently held at the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Napoli (2005). His monumental sculpture, *The Virgin Mother*, is currently on view at the Royal Academy, London.

For further information, please contact the gallery.