

# 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



## **GHADA AMER: *Breathe Into Me***

Saturday, January 21 – Saturday, February 25, 2006

Opening reception for the artist: Saturday, January 21st, from 6 – 8pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Egyptian-born artist Ghada Amer. Born 1963 in Cairo, Amer grew up in the politically charged period that followed the Six-Day War, and in 1974 moved to France with her family. Amer now lives and works in New York. This is the first exhibition of her work at Gagosian Gallery in New York.

Through her paintings, drawings, sculptures and gardens, Ghada Amer has confronted the fundamental notions of feminine vs. masculine, East vs. West, and high art vs. craft for over a decade. She is best known for her use of the great symbols of feminist ire: embroidery as “woman’s work,” hardcore pornography, and religious fundamentalism. Moreover, Amer’s work explores themes of love, sex and untenable desire. In her most recent paintings she both celebrates and challenges adolescent fantasies of love and sex using the visual language of fairytales and glossy pornographic images.

Sexual imagery has always remained a mirage in Amer’s work. The figures in Amer’s paintings urgently offer themselves to the viewer, with open mouths and legs, yet their hypnotic repetition, the broken line of stitching and their truncated bodies render them ungraspable. The shameless display of the bodies becomes an apparition, appearing and disappearing through matted tufts of thread; the viewer must work to unravel the image, experiencing a combined sense of pleasure and frustration.

For this exhibition, Amer also explores these themes on a newly monumental scale. Two works from 2005, measuring 9 x 12 feet, *The Big Black Kansas City Painting RFGA* and *Knotty But Nice*, further push her visual relationship with the machismo of Abstract Expressionism. From a distance Amer’s paintings resemble those of Abstract Expressionism as the canvases are often painted with bold blocks and drips of color, but upon closer inspection, the delicate embroidery reveals itself.

Although Amer has a history of using language in her sculpture and installation projects, this exhibition will feature paintings that, for the first time, solely represent text. In these works Amer has embroidered the definitions of *desire*, *pain*, *torment*, *longing* and *absence*, with one word presented on each canvas. As an iconoclastic counterpart to her sexually explicit paintings, Amer continually asks that we contemplate the persistence, relevance, and especially the beauty of these words.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany this exhibition. For more information, please contact the gallery.