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PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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GALLERY HOURS:    Tue – Sat: 10:00am– 6:00pm

CY TWOMBLY: A Scattering of Blossoms and Other Things

Friday, November 9 – Thursday, December 20, 2007
Opening reception for the artist: Thursday November 8th, from 6 to 8pm

AH! The Peonies
For which
Kusunoki
Took off his
Armour

--Takarai Kikaku

Gagosian Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of recent paintings by Cy Twombly. “A Scattering of Blossoms and Other Things” was first shown at the Collection Lambert in Avignon, France earlier this year.

Twombly conceived these vast and exuberant panel paintings with the décor and balanced order of the typical eighteenth century hôtel particulier in mind. This most recent group of paintings are of a large horizontal format, each comprising six wooden panels. Across their broad surfaces, ideogrammatic blossoms of vivid crayon and viscous pigment, and haikus penciled in the artist’s tremulous scrawl, combine and contrast with drips and efflorescent flows of startling, sometimes offbeat, mannerist color – burgundy, damask yellow, vermilion, rose, and mint green. Each of these so-called “peony” paintings is a daring invention, combining influences as diverse as French Enlightenment art, furnishings, and architecture, Japonisme, and the élan vital of Twombly’s own original Abstract Expressionism.

Twombly’s previous Bacchus series (2005) seethed with the visceral energies of war. In “A Scattering of Blossoms...” war cedes to flowers, for which the hero of the famous haiku disarms himself. Peonies are the favored flowers of Japanese aesthetic contemplation, appearing frequently in illustrations, folding screens, and haikus of the Edo period. Once in bloom, they offer a rush of color and texture. Here, their fragile headiness is captured and memorialized in both image and inscription. By adding his own recollections of haikus by the famous seventeenth century Japanese masters Basho and Kikaku, Twombly points to the human implications that these full-blown, elegiac paintings hold for an artist in the later stages of his life and career.

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Twombly has always blurred the line between painting and drawing, with his strong emphasis on sensation and sensibility, combining elements of gestural abstraction, drawing, and writing in a highly idiosyncratic and potent expression. At once epic and intimate, his work is infused with words, names, references to poetry, mythology, and history. The alternation between the visible and the hidden, between clear and obscured forms, the struggle between memory and oblivion are unifying themes in his work.

Born in 1928 in Lexington, Virginia, Twombly studied art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1947–49); the Art Students League, New York (1950–51); and Black Mountain College in North Carolina (1951–52). In the mid 1950s, following travels in Europe and Africa, he emerged as a prominent figure among a group of artists working in New York that included Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. In 1959, Twombly settled permanently in Italy. In 1968, the Milwaukee Art Center mounted his first retrospective. This was followed by major retrospectives at the Kunsthau Zürich (1987) travelling to Madrid, London and Paris. the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1994) (traveling to Houston, Los Angeles, and Berlin) and the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich (2006). In 1995, the Cy Twombly Gallery opened at the De Menil, Houston, exhibiting works made by the artist since 1954. Twombly lives in Lexington, Virginia, and Italy.

A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by art historian Robert Pincus-Witten will be available.

For further information please contact the gallery.