

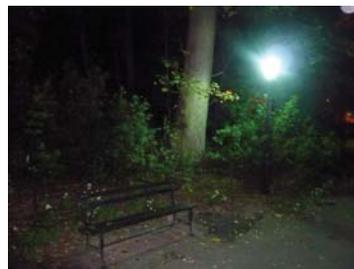
# GAGOSIAN GALLERY

25 November 2008

## PRESS RELEASE

**GAGOSIAN GALLERY**  
17-19 DAVIES STREET  
LONDON W1K 3DE  
GALLERY HOURS:

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Mon - Sat 10:00am – 6:00pm



## DAN COLEN

*I live there...*

Thursday, 27 November – Wednesday, 17 December 2008

*An allegory of faith...*

Thursday, 18 December – Saturday, 7 February 2009

Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, December 18th, from 6 to 8pm

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present Dan Colen's first solo exhibition in London.

The exhibition comprises three components of equal importance: The first is a group of cartoon drawings by a hired illustrator who refers to the notebooks that Colen has filled with art that he has made and wants to make, as well as declarations, common thought, and uncommon fantasy. The second is a large and detailed oil painting entitled *An allegory of faith...*, which depicts the bench in the woods where Walt Disney's Cinderella first meets her Fairy Godmother. The third is a printed booklet of snapshots taken by Colen in Central Park over the course of an afternoon, evening and night, that visitors to the exhibition can take away. The three exhibition components are connected by the otherworldly dark forest and a marked lack of human presence, which is underscored by the vitrine-like quality of the Davies Street storefront gallery.

Seen through the glass window, Colen's painting reflects on the still ardently debated issues raised by Modernist art critic and historian Michael Fried in his seminal studies, "Art and Objecthood" (1967) and *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*, 1980 – the threat posed to aesthetic experience by the "theatrical" materiality of the Minimalist object and, conversely, the theatricality produced by "a consciousness of viewing" at the expense of total aesthetic absorption. Colen's bench-painting, which maps a selective *trompe l'oeil* rendering of a received cartoon image onto the formalism of John McCracken's lacquered plank, limns the space between sculpture, painting, and pure illusion. In Colen's incarnation of Disney's animation, Cinderella has been removed (thus leaving space for the viewer's projection) leaving just the trail of magic dust that appears when the Fairy Godmother moves, metaphysically, in and out of space.

Colen draws equally from mass media, environmental experience and sub-cultural language, seeking to infuse the undervalued and overlooked with a sense of elegance and magic. An explorer of subterfuge and affect, he juggles immediacy of expression, perfection of surface, and slipperiness of meaning. Whether through painstaking reconstruction of 'what might have been' (such as expertly rendered *papier maché* sculptures that feign the casual monuments and sites on which popular culture inscribes its voices and traces; or covertly hand-crafted paintings that emulate the swagger and scrawl of delinquent graffiti) or its inverse (editing, subcontracting or simply stealing and transposing), Colen's self-conscious stance in the world invites viewers to share in unexpected moments of transcendence.

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**Dan Colen** was born in 1979, New Jersey. He graduated with a BFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Art and Design in 2001. International exhibitions include the 2006 Whitney Biennial, New York; "USA Today," The Royal Academy, London; "Defamation of Character," PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island, New York; and "Fantastic Politics," The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

Colen lives and works in New York City.

For further information please contact the gallery +44(0) 207 841 9960 or [london@gagosian.com](mailto:london@gagosian.com).