

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

6-24 BRITANNIA STREET
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GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue – Sat: 10:00am– 6:00pm

TOM FRIEDMAN: *Monsters and Stuff*

Saturday, 31 May – Friday, 25 July 2008

Opening reception for the artist: Friday, May 30th from 6 to 8pm

I think about the full perimeter of the exhibition space as the limits of my consciousness. I position my artwork as points of focus within this space, to navigate you through this arena. I make each piece so distinct that they each press in on themselves. You come across a piece, and then you come across another piece, and then you start developing an understanding of why all these pieces are here, and why they hang or sit together.

I titled this exhibition "Monsters and Stuff" both to create a conceptual backdrop, and to keep it open-ended. From a figurative standpoint, "monsters" represents the abnormal, which is open-ended, whereas "and stuff" states an unresolved conclusion.

We desire resolve.

--Tom Friedman

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Monsters and Stuff*, new work by Tom Friedman. This will be his first solo exhibition at the London gallery.

Empiricist, alchemist, sage, and prankster, Friedman invents startling works of art by taking very ordinary materials - paper, wire, cardboard, plastic cups, pencils, foam core, glitter, Styrofoam - and transforming them using highly specific processes. Whether constructing or deconstructing the object, either on a microscopic or macroscopic level, he meditates on all manner of material existence from dust bunnies to the cosmos, from the idea of nothing to the idea of everything.

In recent years Friedman has expanded his focus to consider both the structure of information and the effects of excessive information on human consciousness. A technical virtuoso, he works on an intricate scale with obsessive attention to detail. His oeuvre reveals five constant elements: the material, the process of altering the material; the form that it takes; its representation; and, finally, the logic that connects these first four elements together, which often appear as diverse ideas and forms. Quirky, humorous and endearing, his mutations and transformations of base material, hovering as they do at the limits of the visible, beg the defining questions of existence itself: What is it? How is it made? Why is it like this? Where did it come from? Why is it here?

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In *Monsters and Stuff* Friedman has constructed a complex landscape of sculptures, small drawings and huge paper collages. Otherworldly creatures morph, float, hang and balance along with bizarre visual phenomena, including glittering, vertigo-inducing images. The general strangeness of the installation is underscored by Friedman's experiments with scale distortion. *Overseer*, a huge figure standing more than nine feet tall, naked except for giant trainers and socks and complete with pubic and underarm hair, tapers upwards from his large feet to his pin head. *Monster Fly* is a noirish nightmare where a man runs from a fly twice his size; in Friedman's world, both are less than an inch in height. *In Light*, a piece of 2x4 timber seems to float in a corner of the room. Among these baffling works are various monsters constructed in paper that stare blankly into space, lean half-dead against the wall, or melt into the floor (*Green Demon* and *Zombie*). Friedman's drawing continues to develop in increasingly surreal ways, such as *Aluminum Foil Drawing*, a portrait of a monster made in foil, to *Supreme Being*, a large, mirrored scrawl that conveys a message of doom.

Coinciding with the London exhibition, Gagosian Gallery has published a new monograph on Friedman's work, distributed by Yale University Press. A comprehensive survey, it includes essays by philosopher Arthur C. Danto and Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery. A limited edition of the publication will also be available. For further information please contact dgoldak@gagosian.com.

Tom Friedman was born in St Louis, MO in 1965. He lives and works in Leverett, MA. Solo exhibitions of his work include the Museum of Modern Art (1995), the Art Institute of Chicago (1996), Fondazione Prada, Milan (2002), and South London Gallery (2004). A major exhibition of his work toured U.S. museums from 2000 to 2002, including MCA Chicago and The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Most recently his work was included in "The Shapes of Space", Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and "Art in America: Now", MOCA Shanghai.

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