

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

7 July 2010

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

VIA FRANCESCO CRISPI 16

00187 ROME ITALY

GALLERY HOURS:

SUMMER HOURS:

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Tue – Sat: 10:30am–7:00pm and by appointment

Mon – Fri: 10:30am–7:00pm and by appointment



FRANZ WEST: *Roman Room*

Thursday, 16 September – Saturday, 30 October 2010

Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, September 16th, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

I see my works as quite compatible with a l'art pour l'art philosophy. One may think that I try to take the art object out into the world since my works sometimes appear to have a practical function, but really it's the other way around: things in the world can, under certain special circumstances, enter the realm of art.

--Franz West

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculptures by Franz West.

Belonging to the generation of artists exposed to Actionist and Performance Art of the 1960s and 70s, West instinctively rejected the traditionally passive nature of the relationship between artwork and viewer. In the seventies, he began making a series of small, portable, mixed media sculptures called *Adaptives (Passstücke)*. These “ergonomically inclined” objects become complete as artworks only when the viewer holds, wears, carries or performs with them. West has continued to explore sculpture in terms of an ongoing dialogue of actions and reactions between viewers and objects in any given exhibition space. His amorphous and highly endearing sculptures transform public spaces into sociable aesthetic environments while his furniture designs and subversive collages further challenge the boundaries between art and life.

In this exhibition of new sculptures, West takes basic shapes and transforms them into irregular large-scale constructions. His persistent playfulness with the principles of classical sculpture is evident in *Ecolalia* (2010), a group of seven painted totems built from papier-mâché, cardboard, polystyrene, and objects. He fashions each one into a precariously stacked form that rises out of a trash can or bucket for a pedestal, grappling with contingency and equilibrium to produce unexpected results. Some of them teeter almost three and a half meters high with alternating rectangular and circular forms while others evoke the shape of a funnel. They can be viewed from sofas that West has designed both for comfort and to provide alternative positions and viewing platforms throughout the show.

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A two-part sculpture *Caino va incontro ad Abele* (2009) re-imagines the foundational biblical story as two figures, painted in swathes of whimsical color, set in an opposing stance like sparring partners.

The exhibition catalogue features a text by Achille Bonito Oliva as well as West's own selection of literary, philosophical, and historical texts that he was reading while making these sculptures.

Franz West was born in Vienna in 1947 and studied at the Academy of Applied Arts, Vienna. His work is in many public collections including MAXXI, Rome; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include "We'll Not Carry Coals," Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria in 2003; "Recent Sculptures" at Lincoln Center, New York in 2004; Vancouver Art Gallery in 2005; the MAK, Vienna in 2008; and "To Build A House You Start with the Roof: Work, 1972-2008" at the Baltimore Museum of Art in 2008-2009, which traveled to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2009. A major European retrospective "Franz West: Autotheater" opened at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne earlier this year, traveling to MADRE, Naples and will be on show at the Universalmuseum in Graz, Austria from September to January 9, 2011.

Franz West lives and works in Vienna.

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