

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

6 April 2010

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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JENNY SAVILLE: *Reproduction Drawings*

Thursday, 15 April – Saturday, 15 May 2010

Opening reception for the artist: Thursday, April 15th, from 6 to 8 pm

Bodies fascinate me. I find having the framework of a body essential. Having flesh as a central subject, I can channel a lot of ideas.

--Jenny Saville

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present three recent works on paper by Jenny Saville.

Known for her outsized oil paintings of traumatic female bodies, this is Saville's first exhibition devoted exclusively to drawing. In these large and detailed studies, she articulates specific aspects of her subject, giving powerful graphic life to the anatomical details and expressive movements that animate and underpin her visceral paintings.

Saville has chosen subjects -- including herself -- whose bodies she believes to represent the contemporary era. Rather than working from live studio models, she slowly renders form tangible in oil paint. Bodily orifices fascinate her, as is evident in her depictions of bulging and twisting bodies, imbued with the qualities of mortified flesh. She strives to make visible in viscous passages of paint the precarious states of the human body.

Each of the three drawings in this exhibition portrays the intimate relationship between mother and child, directly inspired by Renaissance nativity portraits, in particular Leonardo da Vinci's cartoon *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist* (National Gallery, London) an atypical scene in which the Virgin contends with a lively Christ-child. The life-size portraits that she entitles "reproduction" -- a pun that conjoins the act of artistic emulation with the feat of motherhood -- renders the two figures in symbiotic flux. In *Reproduction Drawing I and III (after the Leonardo cartoon)* multiple impressions of mother and child, drawn, erased and superimposed, record the mother's patient efforts to hold the wriggling infant. Their relationship is expressed as a dynamic tangle of superimposed limbs and frenetic postures rather than a static composition of iconographic order. In *Reproduction Drawing II (after the Leonardo cartoon)*, the mother grips the ankle of the baby who, from the ghostly lines of previous action recorded on the paper, has come to rest atop her heavily pregnant belly. And, as if in a reversal of the adult-child relationship, she appears absorbed in the process while he looks beyond her, fixing the viewer with his gaze.

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Jenny Saville was born in Cambridge, England in 1970. She studied at the Glasgow School of Art. Her work has been included in exhibitions worldwide including "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection," Royal Academy of Arts, London (1997, traveled to Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York 1998-1999); "The Nude In 20th Century Art," Kunsthalle Emden, Germany (2002, traveled to Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen in 2003); "Painting," Museo Correr, 50th Biennale di Venezia (2003); and "Paint Made Flesh," Frist Center for the Arts, Nashville (2009, traveled to the Philips Collections, Washington DC and Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY in 2010). In 2005, her work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome.

Saville lives and works in Oxford, UK.

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at london@gagosian.com or at +44.207.493.3020.