

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

13 November 2012

PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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Tue–Sat: 10:30am–7:00pm and by appointment



RACHEL FEINSTEIN

Saturday, 17 November 2012–Saturday, 5 January 2013

Opening reception for the artist: Saturday, November 17th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

I'll do a drawing, and then drawings of the drawing, and keep getting away from the source as many times over as I can so I don't just replicate. I'm not interested in trying to copy the object itself. And then sometimes I'll cut up the drawing and hot glue-gun the whole thing into a three-dimensional paper drawing, and either that will become a sculpture on its own—because that weird, flattened, planed-wood sculpture will be really beautiful—or I'll use that as a skeleton, and then I'll add stuff on top.

—Rachel Feinstein

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present a site-specific installation by Rachel Feinstein. This is her first exhibition in Rome.

Feinstein's multi-part installations, which contain autonomous sculptures and paintings, reveal her singular flair for synthesizing a myriad of cultural fascinations—religion, myth, beauty, mortality, decadence—into vignettes of the marvelous. Oil paintings on mirrored surfaces, flat propped sculptures reminiscent of stage dressings, and abstracted reworkings of classical sculpture confront persistent issues of artistic representation such as theatricality and illusionism. By layering quotations from diverse artistic, architectural, cultural, and stylistic sources—from religious iconography to Baroque sculpture, Romantic landscapes, and popular cartoons—art and history are charged with a burlesque sensibility.

In this latest of her compelling fantasies, Feinstein has covered the interior gallery walls with a panoramic wallpaper of an impressionistic Rome. Sourcing and collaging diverse artistic visions of the city from different historical periods, she first made a large oil painting on mirror depicting this heterotopia of her own invention, where an eighteenth century piazza scene buzzing with life jostles against ancient ruins and an Arcadian landscape. This was then printed on mirrored wallpaper, to which five diamond-shaped glass mirrors, painted with faces, are fixed, merging cunningly with the background panorama while catching and reflecting the passing viewer's gaze.

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Against this scenography stand four larger than lifesize sculptures, inspired by favorite depictions of early Christian saints and martyrs. Working from small paper models, the designs are scaled up into curved and spliced wooden elements and coated in pale monochrome resin. Their sketchy, dynamic lines evoke the muscular Baroque aesthetic that dominates the Roman environment, but without the volume or mass. There is the Archangel Michael, who vanquished Satan in a heavenly war; Saint Agatha the virgin martyr and symbol of resistance, who survived numerous tortures for her devout faith, most notably having her breasts cut off as punishment for rejecting the sexual advances of a Roman prefect; Saint Sebastian, who miraculously survived being pierced with arrows for his refusal to disavow his faith, only to be beaten to death later; and Saint Christopher, the patron of travelers who bears the weight of the world upon his shoulders. Devoid of the expressionistic detail of their famous agonies and ecstasies, the sculptures function like shadows in the round, suggestive and yet remote from their original sources.

Rachel Feinstein was born in 1971 in Defiance, Arizona. She studied at Columbia University and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Her work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions, including "The Alliance," Hyundai Gallery, Beijing, China (2008, traveled to Hyundai Gallery, Korea); "Something About Mary," Metropolitan Opera House, New York (2009); "Rachel Feinstein: The Snow Queen," Lever House, New York (2011); and "The Little Black Dress," SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (2012). Feinstein lives and works in New York.

Press Enquiries

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