

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Portraits

October 20 – November 17, 2007

Luhring Augustine is pleased to present *Portraits*, a group exhibition of painting, photography, video and sculpture exploring modern and contemporary practices in the genre of portraiture.

In its most literal manifestation, a portrait is a visual representation of an individual. Typically rendered from a frontal or profile view, traditional portraits were commissioned paintings or sculptures reserved for the highest echelons of society as a means of portraying substantial wealth and power. With the advent of photography in the nineteenth-century, the concept of the portrait was popularized and expanded to include a variety of sub-groups and viewpoints. Contemporary artists have broadened the scope of portraiture beyond the mere depiction of likeness or personality to investigate metaphor, history, cultural archetypes and the politics of identity.

Yasumasa Morimura's *Doublonnage (Marcel)* features the artist replicating Man Ray's famous photograph of Marcel Duchamp in the guise of his feminine alter ego Rose Sélavy. The original portrait explores the notion of alternate personas, androgyny and gender identity. By appropriating and then altering an iconic portrait, Morimura re-examines these issues and challenges the Western canon of art history to incorporate an Eastern point of view.

Johannes Kahrs' pair of portraits entitled *Untitled (auslöschung nr. 2)* and *Untitled (auslöschung nr. 3)* are at once classical and utterly contemporary. His compositions and the use of a three-quarter profile view are reminiscent of Renaissance and Baroque portraits, yet the resigned stance and blank face of the young male subject are reflective of the modern condition. *Auslöschung* translates to 'extinction' and one senses Kahrs' preoccupation with the anonymity of adolescence and the loss of individuality in the face of overwhelming pressure to conform.

Janine Antoni's *Mortar & Pestle* is a metaphor for a portrait in its depiction of the artist in relation to her husband. Antoni attempts to literally experience her partner's loving gaze by licking his eyeball. At once visceral and intensely intimate, the portrait explores identity as a construct defined by interpersonal exchange. Likewise, Felix Gonzalez-Torres' word portrait examines identity in terms of historical events, both private and public. By selecting an institution as his subject as well as dispensing entirely with image in favor of text, Torres subverts the traditional concept of the portrait.

Portraits also includes several images of artists by artists, such as Francesco Clemente's painting of Tunga, Richard Hamilton's digital print of Dieter Roth and Louise Lawler's photograph of an Andy Warhol self-portrait, all of which explore the notion of the artist as persona. These particular portraits both benefit from and contribute to the celebrity and legacy of their subjects.

This exhibition also includes works by John Baldessari, Larry Clark, George Condo, John Currin, Martin Kippenberger, Robert Mapplethorpe, Jonathan Meese, Daido Moriyama, Jack Pierson, Pipilotti Rist, Cindy Sherman, Joel Sternfeld, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Tunga and Andy Warhol.

For more information about this exhibition, please contact Lisa Varghese at (212) 206.9100 or lisa@luhringaugustine.com.