

RICHARD HAWKINS

SINCE THE EARLY 1990S, Richard Hawkins has developed an emphatically diverse practice. Addressing a variety of subjects—including ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, 19th-century French Decadent painting and literature, 1980s teen heartthrobs, and the intricacies of Thai sex tourism—his work is, at its core, about the pleasure of intense looking. Hawkins is an equal-opportunity voveur, but it is the male figure—often young, beautiful, and exoticthat is the primary inspiration for and subject of his art. What seems on the surface to be one man's obsession with objects of desire is indeed a form of obsession, but with objects as such-the tangible, tactile, bodily stuff of life in all its sexy, scary, gorgeous imperfection.

Hawkins's work introduces lesser-known facets of history, people, and situations through the juxtaposition of decidedly dissimilar elements. His creative approach relies on a multiplicity of ideas, and he has dedicated considerable energy toward uncovering how and why, in his words, "the reconstitution of mass produced images is so effective at simultaneously expressing difference within culture and fantasies beyond culture." Collage, thus, is not simply a medium for Hawkins, but a philosophy and methodology that defines his art. His earliest mature statements take this form, and he has been continually reinventing collage within his oeuvre ever since. For this reason, Richard Hawkins: Third Mind-the artist's first American museum survey—is primarily focused on this aspect of his work, as a platform from which to understand his larger practice. The exhibition subtitle refers to William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin's 1978 book, The Third Mind, which introduces the concept of the "cut-up" in literature. It also recalls the subtitle of Hawkins's 2007 show at De Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam: Of two minds, simultaneously. Third Mind serves as a further testament to the "duplicity and ambiguity" that characterizes his work-the conscious and continued propagation of "minds," made up of a steady stream of thoughts, ideas, desires, fantasies, interactions, possibilities, viewpoints, opportunities, opinions, memories, and meanings.

There is a transformative, alchemical quality to Hawkins's process, but often with very little physical or material alteration. In his hands, the most basic means and gestures are powerful in their simplicity. Yet behind these seemingly effortless acts lie a lifetime of books read and a wealth of images studied and loved. A passion for the consumption, processing, and redistribution of knowledge and a chronic curiosity are manifest in



Untitled (Taizo in City), 1995

Hawkins's work. Indeed, his promiscuous shifts of styles and media continually upend expectations of what his practice *should* be or do. Due to the decidedly circuitous nature of his work, linear chronology alone is an insufficient mode of presentation. Thus, this exhibition is laid out in a sequence of "rooms" made up of visual and thematic comparisons that provide just one of many possible bases for comprehending and appreciating the complexities of Hawkins's practice within the larger historical context provided by the encyclopedic setting of the Art Institute.

RYERSON AND BURNHAM LIBRARIES

The earliest work here is *Correspondence* with John Wayne Gacy regarding having a portrait painted of Tom Cruise (1988–94). In an effort to purge the ideas of his graduatestudent thesis exhibition, which focused on Franz Kafka and Tom Cruise, Hawkins concocted a scenario in which either he or Cruise needed to "die," and thus he attempted to commission a painted portrait of the actor by imprisoned serial killer and pederast John Wayne Gacy (1942–1994). The resulting ephemera include copies of Hawkins's letters to Gacy, along with a typewritten signed response, a Christmas card, and a magazine reproduction of one of Gacy's clown portraits. Correspondence and . other works from this period had personal relevance for Hawkins, but they also reflect a broader fascination with true crime. serial killers, and the "then-taboo subjects of body modification, extreme play and transgenderism" among loosely associated members of an early queer culture in Los Angeles.

Also on view are a series of altered books developed out of Hawkins's "day job" as an antiquarian bibliographer, which provided him with access to used exhibition catalogues featuring the work of major painters such as Francis Bacon, Julian Schnabel, and Cy Twombly. These books serve as collage substrates, onto which Hawkins pasted images of pop stars and rockers, including Marky Mark, Axl Rose, Slash, and David Bowie. The artist's interest in painting, composition, color, and gesture is central to all these works. Yet beyond their formal considerations, the particular combinations draw unexpectedly telling parallels between the subjects, including, in Hawkins's words, "the adolescent posturing of both Marky and Schnabel, the seedy theatricality of Bowie and Bacon, and the illiterate but sexy and elegant grunts of both Twombly and Slash." Rather than concealing, here the act of overlaying one element on top of another one becomes revelatory. For beyond the preconceived notions that frame the original subjects, there lie hidden sensual qualities that are stirred up by their imposed togetherness.

ROOM 1

The main part of the exhibition begins in Gallery 182 with Scalps 1 and 2 (both 2010). Made from a Michael Jackson and a red devil mask, the scalps breathe new life into some of the earliest works in the exhibition. Their subtitle—Remember the wonderful days when everything could be explained by terms like 'desire' and 'the body'?-is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the highly theoretical, identitybased climate of the early 1990s, when Hawkins created his original rubber mask sculptures (Room 4). Adjacent to the scalps hang Bad Medicine and Little Pinkfeather (both 2008), the only two paintings included in this exhibition, chosen for their collagelike appearance. For the Celestial Telegraph series, of which they are a part, Hawkins researched how spiritualism, talismanic practices, and fluid definitions of gender among indigenous peoples intersected with their assimilation into Western cultures. Made of used paint rags and palettes, these works exemplify the artist's larger process, an "economy of

reconstitution" in which nothing in the studio goes to waste.

Hawkins's painting practice is obliquely evoked here by a small selection of oil on magazine page collages created in 2000, the year he debuted his first mature canvases. While painting, Hawkins used pages from fashion magazines as temporary palettes, on which he would wipe or lay his brush. The build up of brightly colored swipes, dabs, and smears, often surrounded by oily stains, frequently resulted in stunningly beautiful compositions that betray their seeming lack of intentionality and operate as objects in their own right. These works illustrate a transition between Hawkins's magazine-based collages of the previous 10 years and his return to painting on canvas. Similarly, Tomb (2006) represents painting through sculpture. Hawkins took six years of studio detritus and carefully shrouded the materials in rags, ceremoniously "entombing" them inside a toiletry case-turned-paint box. Cathartic and cryptic, the structure signals a symbolic ending and renewal as the artist's painting practice found new direction.

At the same time, Hawkins developed an ongoing series of canvases that investigate aspects of sex tourism and alternative relationships to gender in Thai culture. Five paintings from this series-Options, not solutions (2004), Burberry Schoolgirl (2005), Customized or Readymade (2005), Dancing poet, Siamese cat (2008), and Seamonster (2009)—are on view concurrently in the Art Institute's Gallery 291. The series is predominantly characterized by ambiguously gendered Thai youths on display for older, Western male patrons, who are either visible or lurking beyond the frame. Despite these works' decidedly taboo themes, Hawkins described his subjects' delight in "having a little of both genders and seeing themselves as bringing a little more lightness, prettiness,



disembodied zombie ben purple, 1997

and sexiness into the world." His figures adopt signature gestures that teeter between elegance and torment, offering unconventional representations of beauty and desire.

ROOM 2

The next room of the exhibition is dominated by 14 selections from Part IV of the ongoing Urbis Paganus series, which Hawkins began in 2006, after a trip to Rome. Exhilarated by the historical celebration of hermaphrodites and other gender ambiguities that he discovered there, he initially conceived the Urbis Paganus collages around a nuclear family: Part I, the taboo-instigating father; Part II, the castrated, hermaphroditic mother; Part III, the homosocial, masculine son; and Part IV, the castrated, effeminate, homosexual son. Part IV is represented here by a 2009 grouping that explores posteriority. The collages incorporate reproductions of sculptures-depicted from behind-that Hawkins cut from German art-history

textbooks and collaged alongside handscrawled observations about the aesthetic and sensual implications of fronts and backs.

The conceit of frontality versus posteriority in sculpture that defines these collages is picked up in Untitled (Taizo in City) (1995), the first of Hawkins's now signature table collages. A modern-day Orientalist ruin, this work has a distinct front and back and consists of objects-including an empty cereal box and Styrofoam coffee cup-sitting atop a warped, cracked table. These "architectural" surrounds provide the setting for the rough-hewn cutout of Japanese fashion model Taizo Ito, who was, in Hawkins's words, "kind of my ideal or type at the time." Here the detritus of studio and life become one, creating a melancholic tableau in which darkness and desire compete for attention.

ROOM 3

In 2007 Hawkins began to take his table collages in a new direction, purchasing readymade wood dollhouses and transforming them into haunted structures that encourage viewers to look at them in the round. This is most evident in the related work Shinjuku Labyrinth (2007), a low-lying, roofless maze inhabited by cutouts of Japanese fashion models. In much the way that Hawkins's oil on magazine pages relate to his painted canvases of the same period, the Loiterer (2009) collages hanging behind the labyrinth are a direct result of the haunted structures. While applying black, gray, or purple color to the house exteriors, Hawkins dripped and swiped his brush across white sheets of paper, creating elegant, calligraphic paintings to which he again collaged figures cut from Japanese magazines.

Between 1995 and 1997, Hawkins experimented with computer-aided drawing and printing processes to consider alternate modes of collage making. These experiments led to one of his best-known series: *disembodied zombies* (1997). These large-scale Iris prints feature the floating heads of fashion models Ben Arnold and George Clements and actor Skeet Ulrich—digitally removed from their bodies with added effects to make them appear grotesque and ghoulish, yet somehow still beautiful in their monstrosity—set against soft, ethereal backgrounds.

The mood of Hawkins's recent endeavors is markedly lighter than that of his early work. The 2009 *Dragonfly* collages, shown interspersed among the *Loiterers*, exemplify this shift. While hot yellows, pinks, and oranges are not new to his repertoire, the *Dragonflys* project a particular freedom, openness, and joy that are not evident in earlier works, their inclusion here creating a palpable tension between colorful lightness and eerie gloom.

ROOM 4

This exhibition includes a number of early works shown for the first time since their creation; together these demonstrate a range of material approaches that explore the possibilities for sculptural dimensionality in collage through the use of rubber or fabric. Titled after heavy metal bands, Every Mother's Nightmare, Trixter, and Skid Row (all 1991) are made of rubber Halloween masks that Hawkins cut into strips and paper-clipped with collage elements of favorite band members. By cutting the masks into strips, the artist made them unrecognizable as faces; rather, they appear like strands or piles of exposed, unidentifiable, entrail-like flesh. Like a human body, Hawkins's masks dry, stiffen, and eventually crumble and "die," mirroring the arc of celebrity and loss of popularity that these rockers had already begun to experience in the early 1990s.

Heavy metal rockers also appear in Captive, blue and Captive, brown (both 1993), each of which comprises a large rectangular sheet of felt, pinned on the edges with magazine cutouts and handwritten Post-it notes expressing nihilistic sentiments and phrases taken from Proust's Prisoner (1923). Human in scale, these works become the pelt or hide to the rubber masks' innards. The related Post-it note collages, including RRSPS, SRPP, SJJSS, and SPP consist of a solid patchwork of fashion magazine scraps in which the Post-its provide the only visual pauses in the action. The words suffering, pain, regret, and jealous-again, refrains from Proustappear in various combinations and serve to counteract the effect of, in Hawkins's words, "the cute guys in those collages . . . with the memory of how it always ends badly."

The Greasers vs. the Socs (some of us didn't even know we were indians) (2004) brilliantly elaborates on the inquiry into native assimilation evoked in *Bad Medicine*, *Little* *Pinkfeather, Tomb*, and several concurrent series of paintings. The 18-part work, whose title stems from the 1983 film *The Outsiders*, combines collage, drawing, painting, and writing on paper often torn from spiralbound sketchbooks. The collage elements, accompanied by Hawkins's handwritten commentary, combine original sketches, film stills, and photo-reproductions from textbooks depicting Native Americans. The piece offers a parallel between the film's poor white Oklahomans—who might unknowingly be of mixed race—and historical images of Indians on the path to assimilation.

ROOM 5

Like nearly all his work from the early 1990s, *Crepuscule #1* and *#3* (both 1994) embody Hawkins's interest in the stylized, decorative sensuality of the French Decadent movement. Here the artist made fashion models and movie stars, including Marcus Schenkenberg and Keanu Reeves, even more exotic by affixing their likenesses to kitschy, yet seductive Chinese lanterns that evoke 18th- and 19th-century Orientalism.

A nearly enclosed box, House of the Mad Professor (2008) restricts access unless viewers lower themselves to peer into several small portals. Inside is a series of optical illusions and visual games in which miniature collage figures-each conjoining male and female torsos and legs from reproductions of Greek and Roman statuary—are alternately hidden and revealed in mirrors and through doorways. Hawkins described the imagined inhabitant of the house as a "cranky old codger" whose attempt to squirrel these delightful oddities away is frustrated by the fact that they are only illusions. The exploration of sculptural posteriority that began in Taizo in City and the Urbis Paganus collages is a critical aspect of Dilapidarian Tower (2010), the first of Hawkins's sculptures since 1995 with a recto and verso. While

works such as *Tomb* and *House of the Mad Professor* are essentially about concealing, the tower is about exposure. The work literally airs its dirty laundry in the form of itty-bitty rags (repurposed from the artist's old studio shirts, boxers, and thermal underwear), which he attached to tiny clotheslines stretched across screened-in windows.

The two most recent collages in the exhibition, *Edogawa Ranpo 1* and 2 (both 2010), are titled after the pseudonym of Japanese mystery writer and critic Hirai Taro (1894–1965). Composed of cutouts of heads from Japanese hairstyle magazines floating like ghosts on the surface of a drawing of a decrepit interior, these works are a culmination of the main strains of Hawkins's practice over the last decade.

Hawkins continually reconstructs himself as an artist with a practice that is unified by constant yet fluid shifts over time and among genres, techniques, and media. Inherent in his work is an invitation to feel things at the extremes of human experience and an acknowledgment, even championing, of desire, pleasure, prettiness, and difference as productive ends in themselves. Seducing us with their bizarre beauty, Hawkins's works impel us to frontiers of desire and reverie that many of us might rather leave unexplored. The intense liberation that arises from confronting and embracing the embarrassing, the difficult, and the uncomfortable-along with the beautiful—is profoundly meaningful in a way that only the very best art can claim to be.

ASSISTANT CURATOR DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ART

LISA DORIN

RICHARD HAWKINS

Born Mexia, Texas, 1961

Master of Fine Arts, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, 1988 Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Texas, Austin, 1984

Lives and works in Los Angeles, California

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2010

Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles

2009

Greene Naftali, New York

Corvi-Mora, London

2008

Celestial Telegraph Paintings: Spiritualism, Technology, and American Indians, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Berlin

Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

2007

Of two minds, simultaneously, De Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam (cat.)

Richard Telles Fine Art

2006

Corvi-Mora

Urbis Paganus Part I + III, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Greene Naftali

2004

Richard Telles Fine Art Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Corvi-Mora

2003

Galerie Praz-Delavallade, Paris Kunstverein Heilbronn,

Germany

Richard Telles Fine Art

2002

Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Corvi-Mora

2001

Galerie Praz-Delavallade Richard Telles Fine Art

2000

Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne Corvi-Mora

1999

Galerie Praz-Delavallade *Richard Hawkins and Champion Studios,* Richard Telles Fine Art Ynglingagtan 1, Stockholm 1997 Richard Telles Fine Art

1996 Richard Telles Fine Art

Feature, New York

Ynglingagatan 1

c. 1975–76: wiley wiggins, frail 8th-grade oddity/ freshman glam (w/ matt dillon as my boyfriend at the time), Richard Telles Fine Art

1993

into the heart of china, Richard Telles Fine Art

Feature

1992

... And November, in this Year of No Hope, Without Gladness..., Roy Boyd Gallery, Santa Monica

Mincher/Wilcox Gallery, San Francisco

SELECTED GROUP

2010

At Home/Not at Home: Works from the Collection of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

2009

Beg Borrow and Steal, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (cat.)

Compass in Hand: Selections from the Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York (cat.)

Quodlibet II, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Round Up, Richard Telles Fine Art

2008

Index: Conceptualism in California from the Permanent Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Works on Paper and Ricci Albenda, Greene Naftali

Aaron Curry, Richard Hawkins, Peter Saul, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Painting Now and Forever, Part II, Greene Naftali and Matthew Marks, New York

Society for Contemporary Art Acquisition Finalist Exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago

2007

Post Rose: Artists in and out of the Hazard Park Complex, Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin

L.A. Desire (Part 2), Galerie Dennis Kimmerich, Düsseldorf

Good Morning, Midnight, Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York

You Always Move in Reverse, Leo Koenig Gallery, New York

STUFF: International Contemporary Art from the Collection of Burt Aaron, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

L.A. Desire (Part I), Galerie Dennis Kimmerich

RAW: Among the Ruins, Marres Centre for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, Netherlands (cat.)

2006

Red Eye: L.A. Artists from the Rubell Family Collection, The Rubell Family Collection (cat.)

Richard Telles Fine Art

Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne at Metro Pictures, Metro Pictures, New York

The Swan Is Very Peaceful, Richard Telles Fine Art

2005

The Blake Byrne Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (cat.)

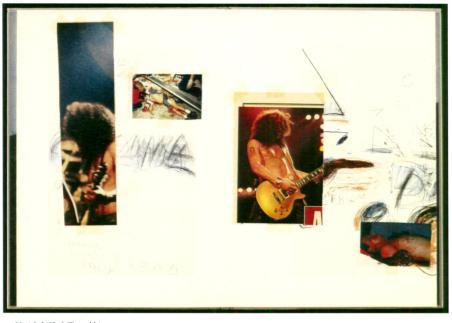
Plip, Plip, Plippity, Richard Telles Fine Art

Paris-Londres: Le voyage intérieur, Espace Electra, Paris

2004

Teil 2 "Quodlibet," Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Dave Muller: Themeless (A Carnival of Sorts), Public Art



Untitled (Slash/Twombly), 1992

Fund Projects in Central Park, a collaboration with the Whitney Biennial, The Arsenal Gallery, Central Park

2003

Honey, I Rearranged the Collection, 1a Kempsford Road, London

Ishtar, Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota (cat.)

Richard Telles Fine Art

2002

Grey Gardens, Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles

Prophets of Boom—aus der Sammlung Shürmann, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (cat.)

Mirror Image, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

L.A. on My Mind: Recent Acquisitions from MOCA's Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Richard Telles Fine Art

2000

Galerie Daniel Buchholz at Jürgen Becker, Hamburg

Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne

Unraveling Desire, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College

Hairy Forearm's Self-Referral, Feature

1998

In Your Face, Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh *Hollywood Satan*, Mark

Moore Gallery, Santa Monica WOp: Works on/off paper,

ANP, Antwerp, Belgium

Codex USA: Works on Paper by American Artists, Entwistle, London

Feature

The Unreal Person: Portraiture in the Digital Age, Huntington Beach Art Center (cat.)

Science, Feature

L.A. on Paper 2: Fantastic Matter of Fact, Galerie • Krinzinger, Vienna

1997

Chill, the University Art Gallery, University of California at Irvine

Scene of the Crime, Hammer Museum (cat.)

Hello, Feature

gnarleyand, Feature

1996

Tangles, Otis Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles

Richard Telles Fine Art

How will we behave?, Robert Prime, London

1995

Crystal Blue Persuasion, Feature *The Moderns*, Feature *Youth Culture Killed My Dog (But I Don't Really Mind)*, TBA Exhibition Space, Chicago

Narcissistic Disturbance, Otis Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design (cat.)

In a Different Light, University Art Museum, Berkeley (cat.)

1994

Pure Beauty: Some Recent Work from Los Angeles, American Center, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

And, Feature

Red Rover, Three Day Weekend, Los Angeles

Tiny Shoes, A Tribute to Jack T. Chick, New Langton Arts, San Francisco

Slice and Dice: An Exhibition of Collage, Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago

1993

Caca, Kiki, San Francisco Three-Person Exhibition.

Feature Stoned (HighLow), Ruth

Stonea (HighLow), Ruth Bloom Gallery, Santa Monica Trisexual, TRI (A Room with Three Works), Los Angeles

Home Alone, Bliss, Pasadena

1992

Hollywood, Hollywood: Identity under the Guise of Celebrity, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena

the Mud Club, Winchester Cathedral and Lake Nairobi, Gahlberg Gallery, McAninch Arts Center, College of DuPage, Illinois

Trouble over So Much Skin, Feature

In Pursuit of a Devoted Repulsion, Roy Boyd Gallery, Santa Monica

True Grit, b.b. la femme Gallery, San Diego

1991

Roy Boyd Gallery

Stüssy, Feature

The Rock Show, Southern Exposure, San Francisco

Presenting Rearwards, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles (cat.)

Situation: Perspectives on Work by Lesbian and Gay Artists, New Langton Arts

Examples Cool and Lonely: An Exhibition of Artists and Writers, Roy Boyd Gallery

1990

Que Overdose!, Mincher/ Wilcox Gallery, San Francisco

1989

Chains of Bitter Illusion, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions

1988

HoHoHoMo, Feature

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OPENING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 6:00–8:30 p.m. Exhibition Preview Abbott Galleries (182–84), Gallery 291 and Rverson and Burnham Libraries

Opening Reception Griffin Court

LECTURE

THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 6:00 p.m. Exhibition curator Lisa Dorin Rubloff Auditorium

GALLERY TALKS

TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 12:00 p.m. Exhibition coordinator Jenny Gheith Griffin Court

TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER

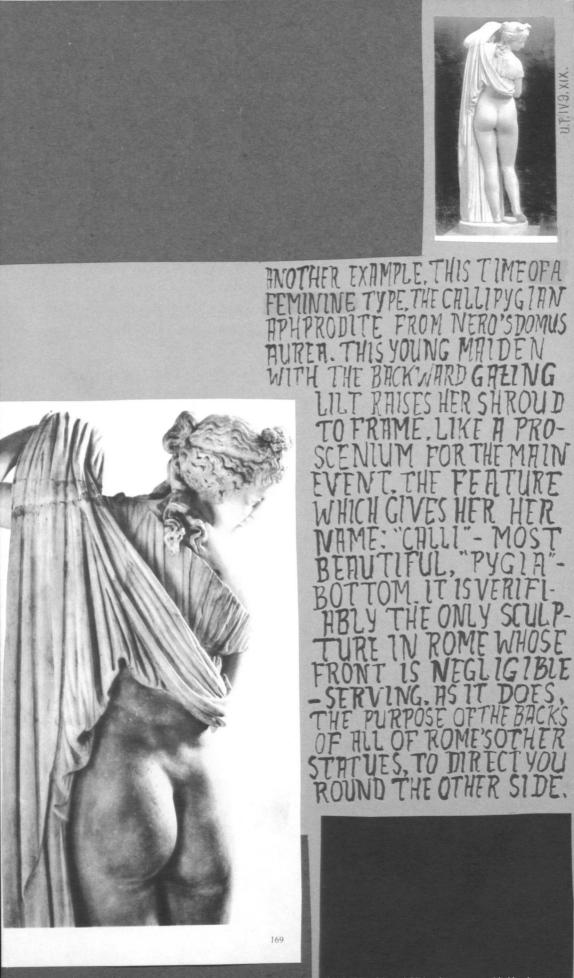
12:00 p.m. Exhibition curator Lisa Dorin Griffin Court

THANKS

Nicholas Barron, Jack Brown, Daniel Buchholz, Blake Byrne, William Caddick, Charles Campbell, David Campbell, Paul Chan, Lauren Chang, Bernice Chu, Christine Conniff-O'Shea, Rena Conti, Dennis Cooper, Tommaso Corvi-Mora, James Cuno, Dennis Dahlqvist, Markus Dohner, Christine Fabian, Jenny Gheith, Dr. Stephan and Ingvild Goetz, Carol Greene, Sarah Guernsey, Robert Hashimoto, Gladys-Katherina Hernando, Jim Isermann, Michelle Lehrman Jenness, Kelly Keegan, Walther König, Kate Kotan, Jeanne Ladd, Robert Lade, Kourosh Larizadeh and Luis Pardo, Chai Lee, Robert Lifson, Patricia Loiko, Max Maslansky, John McAllister, Doug McClemont, Alfred L. McDougal and Nancy Lauter McDougal, Neil and Shelly Mitchell, Joseph Mohan, John Morace and Tom Kennedy, Angela Morrow, Ivan Moskowitz, Sara Moy, Christopher Müller, Kimberly Nichols, Peter Norton, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Laurence Rickels, Craig Robins, James Rondeau, Jay Sanders, Dorothy Schroeder, Sam and Shanit Schwartz, Margaret Sears, Robert Sharp, Barry Sloane, Jennifer Sostaric, Jason Stec, Harriet Stratis, Ali Subotnick, Richard Telles, David Thurm, Tiffany Tuttle and Richard Lidinsky, Joel Wachs, Susan Weidemeyer, Jeff Wonderland, and Elizabeth Stepina Zinn. Special thanks to the artist. LD

FRONT COVER: *Loiterer 2* (detail), 2009 BACK COVER: *Urbis Paganus IV.9.XIX* (*Callipygia*) (detail), 2009

PRINTED ON FSC-CERTIFIED RECYCLED PAPER.



This exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support provided by the Cozzi Family Charitable Fund and James Cahn and Jeremiah Collatz. Ongoing support for **focus** exhibitions is provided by the Alfred L. McDougal and Nancy Lauter McDougal Fund for Contemporary Art. Generous support is provided by members of the Exhibitions Trust.