

Laura Owens**20 November 2008 – 10 January 2009
69 South Audley Street London W1**

For her fourth show with Sadie Coles HQ, Laura Owens presents a body of new work. Abstract in style, these paintings and drawings evade easy analysis. The colourful canvases transform under scrutiny, as objects morph into figures, while figurative elements dissolve into abstraction, and other marks gain a new figurative resonance. The aesthetic charm of Owens' work, which glories in pictorial elegance, is deliberately upset by this unsettling experience, which forces the viewer to question different ways of looking.

The euphoric playfulness of Owens' painting resists classification. She describes her practice as porous, absorbing a steady flow of diverse influences, from folk art to landscape, from decorative art to portraiture. Attracted to little known and anonymous artists, where an identifiable ego is absent, Owens' work is remarkably modest. Her opus defies any notion of a linear trajectory of thematic progression, as each piece appears to present a new beginning. She captures the ambling curiosity of the artist, while commenting on the struggles of such a career: 'waiting until it gels, sitting through the pain. Like the hard part of meditation.'

Laura Owens lives and works in Los Angeles, USA, and was born in 1970 in Euclid, Ohio; she studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and the California Institute of Arts. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, Netherlands (2007); Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland (2006); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, (2003) – an exhibition which travelled to Aspen Art Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. Laura Owens' paintings have been included in several group shows, such as the 2007 *Summer Exhibition* at the Royal Academy, as well as key international exhibitions including the 2004 Whitney Biennial. A comprehensive catalogue of her work was published in conjunction with the Kunsthalle Zürich show by JRP Ringier, Zürich, in 2006.