

RUDOLF STINGEL

09 September – 10 October 2009
69 South Audley Street and
9 Balfour Mews London W1

Sadie Coles HQ is delighted to announce a new solo show by Rudolf Stingel across both gallery spaces. Stingel has created a series of large-scale 'gauze' paintings and a number of photorealistic paintings of medieval carvings of saints. This conjunction of abstraction and figuration – which the curator Francesco Bonami has called a negotiation of eternal time (*kronos*) and the individual moment (*kairos*)¹ – has been a defining feature of Stingel's twenty-five year career. It also highlights a dialectic underpinning his work between the painted subject and painting as subject.

Stingel's silver-toned gauze works – created by applying a layer of gauze to a wet surface, spraying paint over the top, and lifting the gauze off – bear the imprints of folds and creases, engendering the illusion of a relief surface. As the repositories of chance marks and gestures, the canvases draw attention to their own materiality. Yet they also possess an abstract iridescence and disarming ethereality, conjuring forth an 'aura' that is odds with their mechanical method of production.



Stingel's chiaroscuro renderings of statues of saints mark a new development in his work. Painted with crystalline precision from archival black and white photographs, the paintings channel their medieval source materials' air of solemn ritual. They also provoke questions about the sanctity of the gallery space itself; critic Jerry Salz has indeed described Stingel's saint paintings as "a requiem for the white cube".

While they are the formal antithesis of Stingel's abstract paintings, these works are aligned with his wider practice on a conceptual level, mounting a self-reflexive exploration of painting as a metaphor for perception and memory. The process of layering that gives rise to Stingel's abstract works is analogous to the conceptual 'layering' in his figurative paintings, whose replication of photographic reproductions (themselves showing carved representations) unseat the notion of an 'original' or indeed fixed subject. In this sense, Stingel's works articulate the arbitrariness of memory, playing out the idea that a recollected subject is merely the retracing of an earlier memory.

Rudolf Stingel was born in 1956 in Merano, Italy. Major solo shows include *Rudolf Stingel*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2007; and solo exhibitions at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2004) and the Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Trento, Italy (2001). His work has featured in group shows such as *Day for Night: Whitney Biennial 2006*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, which travelled to the Hayward Gallery, London, 2005. His work was included in the 2003 and 1999 Venice Biennales. Rudolf Stingel lives and works in New York and Bolzano, Italy.

¹ Francesco Bonami in *Rudolf Stingel* (Chicago: MCA Chicago / Yale University Press, 2007)

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Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 10 – 6pm