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## ***183rd ANNUAL: AN INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ART***

**May 29 – September 7, 2008**

Opening & reception: May 28, 6 – 9 p.m.

The *183rd Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art* offers a wide range of compelling styles, mediums, scale and points-of-view by 130 contemporary American artists from across the country. This non-member biennial exhibition is comprised of architectural renderings, collages, drawings, installations, paintings, photographs, prints, sculpture, and watercolors by emerging, mid-career, and well-established artists. Selections were made from over four-hundred recommended artists submitted for consideration by National Academicians and chosen by a curatorial committee comprised of a panel of seven prominent artist members.

Striking examples of some of the fresh and innovative artistic explorations that contemporary American artists are engaged in today can be seen in the electrifying room-sized optical floor piece by emerging installation artist **Lisha Bai**, the intimate miniature wall sculpture of **Matthew Northridge**, and the shadowy fragments of projected geometric forms in the installation of **Soo Sunny Park**. The illuminated small sculptures of **James O. Clark**, who uses light to underscore the linear movement of the crushed metal shapes he creates, while the minimalist-based work of **Jean Feinberg** employs a found wood ledge affixed to the wall with 11 small panels of muted color placed across it in a repetitive pattern. Sculptor **Maria Elena González** offers a house set atop a tall tapering stand that addresses issues of personal displacement and migration within a conceptually-based vocabulary of architectural space. Ceramicist **Betty Woodman** blurs the boundary between fine art and craft in her exuberantly colored and patterned vessels which hint at past cultures. Like Woodman, Brazilian born sculptor **Saint Clair Cemin**, references the heavily breasted fertility figures of pre-history combined with the playfulness of children's building toys, in his highly polished, bulbous shaped floor sculpture.

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Painting is well-represented in this Annual as seen in the rigorous geometric works of **Ben La Rocco** and **Don Voisine**; the sensuous abstractions of **Loretta Dunkelman**; the heightened color and rich brushwork of **Eve Olitski**; and the small-scale works of monumental intensity by **Nancy Brett**. Also, **Sean Scully** creates stripes and brick-like forms that reference ancient walls with deep color and luminous surfaces; and **José Bedia's** large-scale painting offers an iconic African power figure set within abstract space. A two-sided painting construction by **Ken Weathersby** offers subtle changes in form, from one side to the other, as the hidden surface is revealed to the viewer. Best known for his monumental installations of charred cotton bales, **Leonardo Drew** shows a 25-panel work of "rust" prints of schematic building types, each set within a grid that uses corrosion as its medium and as a subtext for the work. The figure is also represented in paintings by **Jenna Gribbon** who uses isolated figures and objects in interiors to relay a sense of alienation and psychological narrative.

Contemporary architects **Steven Holl** and **James Wines** are represented by their watercolor renderings of structures recently built, offering insight into the creative process of constructing in physical space.

Photographic work is seen in the unique oil prints of **E.E. Smith's** series of surveillance photographs taken on the city streets, hinting at a breach in the privacy of its citizens in a post-911 world. Black and white photographs done by **Latoya Ruby Frazier** show personal experience in the confines of her home and family; **Cynthia Lin's** extreme close-up drawing of a mouth becomes abstract in this context; as does **Jeffrey Fichera's** *trompe l'oeil* drawing of an elevator door; and, conversely, in the exacting super-realism of **Leonard Stokes'** digital collage.

A catalogue documenting trends, process, and media explored by the artists who are participating accompanies this exhibition. Written by art historian and Artist Membership Director, Nancy Malloy, this important resource includes an introduction by the Academy's President, Susan Shatter.

A separate awards committee of National Academician's will also give away over \$100,000 in prizes. The awards ceremony will take place at 6:30 p.m. in the Huntington Library on May 28, 2008 and is open to the public.

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## EXHIBITION RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

***AN ARTIST'S LIFE WITH KATY SIEGEL:*** a panel discussion presented in consort with the *183<sup>rd</sup> Annual: An Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary American Art.*

**Thursday, May 29 - 6:30 P.M.**

Katy Siegel, Associate Professor of Art History and Criticism at Hunter College, leads a discussion with contemporary artists **David Reed, Julie Heffernan, and Dannielle Tegeder**, to examine the trajectory of their careers and the personal pathways they have chosen.

Admission is \$5, free to students National Academicians and *Friends of the Academy*. Reservations are requested and can be made by contacting the Education Department through telephone: 212.369.4880, ext.300 or email: [education@nationalacademy.org](mailto:education@nationalacademy.org).

The National Academy Museum & School of Fine Arts is an honorary association of professional American artists with a museum and an art school, modeled on London's Royal Academy. The institution was founded in 1825 to promote contemporary painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and architecture in the United States. The Academy's Museum organizes traveling shows accompanied by scholarly catalogues, hosts exhibitions from other museums. The Academy's School features classes and master workshops in all styles and media. Public programs including lectures, symposia, panel discussions, and events for seniors and families are offered to the public.

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