

FISHER LANDAU CENTER FOR ART

DONALD BAECHLER: Painting & Sculpture

On view through April 1, 2012

Fisher Landau Center for Art is pleased to present an exhibition exploring a wide range of Donald Baechler's artwork in two and three dimensions, created over the last 25 years. In the mid 1980's, the subject matter of his large-scale paintings began quite literally to jump off the walls, transforming into monumental bronze sculptures. Installed on two floors of the Center, the exhibition is made up of work from Fisher Landau Center for Art, supplemented by work from Donald Baechler's personal collection, highlighting the interplay of recurring motifs as they transform from the painted surface to objects in space.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1956, Baechler's artistic training took place in New York, Baltimore, and Germany. In the early 80s, Baechler came into prominence alongside Basquiat, Haring, Condo and the German artists - Dokoupil and Kippenberger. He has exhibited internationally since the outset of his career and is renowned for a distinctive practice, evoking a child-like fascination with cultural symbols and commonplace elements. Emily Fisher Landau began collecting his artwork in 1985 with the purchase of *Globe*, 1984/85, a 52 inch square canvas whose surface is made with acrylic, cotton, paper & rhoplex. Since that time Mrs. Landau has added close to 30 pieces, comprising a selection of painting, sculpture & works on paper that form a cohesive cross section of Baechler's thematic vocabulary.

Included in the installation are *Priceless, Wordless, Loveless*, 1987-88, (111 x 111 inches), exhibited in the 1989 Whitney Biennial, a painting on linen that became the inspiration for *Tree*, 1988, one of Baechler's first sculptures cast in bronze. Other paintings on display include *Deep North*, 1989, also included in the 1989 Whitney Biennial, a seminal example of his textural layering process using acrylic, oil and fabric collage on linen, as well as *Autonomy or Anarchy #1* (102 1/2 x 117 3/4 inches) & *Autonomy or Anarchy #2* (99 x 114 inches), both 2003, enormous works on paper depicting disembodied horse heads, facing each other and floating on a frenetic field of collaged paper and fabric, and mounted to linen. *Scarecrow*, 2006, (136 x 70 x 37 inches) a towering bronze installed on the outdoor entry ramp, welcomes the viewers to the Center with a passive demeanor that belies its aggressive scale. *Bather (large version)*, 1997 (78 x 66 x 60 inches), a fountain of cast bronze featuring an archetypal Baechler figure immersed in an enormous water-filled bucket, is installed in the courtyard. The third floor gallery presents an oversized landscape made up of Baechler's bronze *Plants*, 2003-04 and *Flowers*, 2003-07, ranging in size up to seven feet tall, along with 2 plaster *Flowers*, 2011, displayed in their raw state prior to being cast in bronze.

Housed in a former parachute harness factory, Fisher Landau Center for Art was designed by Max Gordon in association with Bill Katz and is devoted to the exhibition and study of the contemporary art collection of Emily Fisher Landau. The core of the 1500 work collection spans 1960 to the present and contains key works by artists who have shaped the most significant art of the last 50 years. Emily Fisher Landau's insightful selection of works by contemporary masters, many of which she purchased from the artists at the outset of their careers, is reflected in exhibitions presented at Fisher Landau Center for Art. Her ongoing commitment to emerging artists extends to the annual presentation of the Columbia University School of Visual Arts MFA Thesis Exhibition. In May of 2010, Mrs. Landau made a historic pledge of 417 artworks by nearly 100 artists, to the Whitney Museum of American Art. Excerpts from *Legacy*, a traveling exhibition that highlights the gift to the Whitney Museum, will be on view at the Center concurrently with *Donald Baechler: Painting & Sculpture*.

This exhibition is made possible in collaboration with Cheim and Read Gallery, NY.
For more information contact us by E-mail or call (718) 937-0727.