

JAMES KELLY CONTEMPORARY - PRESS RELEASE
1601 Paseo de Peralta - Santa Fe, NM 87501 - 505.989.1601

Franz West HURDY GURDY

Opening Reception: **Thursday**, July 15, 2004, 5:00-7:00 pm
Exhibition: Thursday, July 15, 2004 - Saturday, September 18, 2004

Contact: David Marshall - david@jameskelly.com



papier-mâché, styrofoam, cardboard,
lacquer & acrylic
68-1/2 x 59-3/4 x 44 inches



papier-mâché, plaster, gauze, paint, metal
& wood on wheels
37-1/4 x 46-1/2 x 35-1/2 inches

James Kelly Contemporary is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition of Austrian sculptor and collage artist Franz West. Among the works on display are recent papier-mâché sculptures, painted-over collages, metal furniture and half a dozen sculptures called *paßstücke*, which will be on loan, to SITE Santa Fe for inclusion in *Disparities and Deformations*. This is the first exhibition of these works in the United States.

Inspired by the Viennese Actionists of the 60's West began, in the 70's, by creating *paßstücke*, handheld papier-mâché sculptures also referred to as "body growths" or "Adaptives." These are art objects that are meant to transform the passive viewer into the active agent of the art experience. Among West's 2-D works lie his collages, created many times as promotional posters for upcoming exhibitions. Mounted on canvas or plywood, West uses oil paints to paint over his own photographs. These often look like images out of catalogues from the 50's or 70's with staged models wearing or presenting *paßstücke*, often times nude from waist down. Also working with appropriated imagery, he builds narratives with dated catalogue and magazine images, often humorous with sexual innuendo. The artist has also made a unique promotional poster specifically for this exhibition.

West's papier-mâché sculptures, "Alpenglühn," "element of the environment," (image above - right) can be seen as strange rock formations coated with hues that have strayed far away from any traditional color wheel. Oddly natural in appearance, West's formations appear to breathe and balance on small circular objects, while visible masking tape acts as reference to this being a man made creation. These sculptures are often displayed on the tables they are created on, leaving the wooden base with wheels a part of the presentation and the art. The furniture built by West, made from metal and fabric, is possibly the most recognizable form to the eye of all of West's creations. This exhibition will consist of several "Uncle Chairs," fashioned from oriental rugs and assorted fabrics, whereon the artist invites the audience to sit and rest. This approach again confronts the viewer as the active agent.

Never limiting himself to one medium or a single approach to making art, West has exhibited drawings, collage works, sculptures, video projection and room size installations. However, one constant within his approach lies within the idea of making art to be experienced. Whether it be a hand held object or furniture to lie upon, a defined interaction between the viewer and the object (the art) is commanded.

Devoid of any moral or political stance, it seems that West's concept is buried within the craft. By giving little importance to the purely visual aspect of the art and placing the emphasis on its functionality the audience is confronted with the experience the art lends. It is this experience, between the work and participant that allows the art to grow beyond its visual and physical boundaries.



collage & oil paint on canvas
55-1/2 x 52-1/2 inches



collage & oil paint on canvas
55-1/2 x 52-1/2 inches

"Early on I realized that the purely visual experience of an artwork was somehow insufficient. I wanted to go beyond the purely optical and include tactile qualities as well. My works aren't things one just looks at, but things that the viewer is invited to handle. There have been many theories of art that try to break down the border between art and the world, but I don't find such attempts to be particularly meaningful. Art remains art. I really see my work as quite compatible with the *l'art pour l'art* philosophy. One may think that I try to bring the art object out into the world since my works sometimes appear to have a practical function, but really it's the other way around: things in the world can, under certain special circumstances, enter the realm of art. And, in fact, once they have entered this realm they are art." -Franz West

West has exhibited internationally for over 30 years with over 100 catalogues and books published since the 80's. He was a participating artist in *Documenta X* in Kassel, Germany and has exhibited in over 40 solo shows since 1996, as well as numerous traveling museum shows. Among West's many biennial invitations, including Venice twice, Sydney twice, Lyon, Valencia, Melbourne and Sao Paulo, he will be included in this year's SITE Santa Fe Biennial: *Disparities and Deformations: Our Grotesque*, curated by Robert Storr.

James Kelly Contemporary is located at 1601 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00-5:00 p.m. - Saturday from 12:00-5:00 p.m. - Monday by appointment. Please call the gallery at 505.989.1601 - fax 505.989.5005 - email info@jameskelly.com for more information.

- high resolution images available upon request -