

BETTY CUNINGHAM GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rackstraw Downes, “A Selection of Drawings: 1980 – 2010”



*Traffic Under the George
Washington Bridge*
2009
Graphite on tan paper
14 ½ x 46 inches

On View: June 3 – July 30, 2010

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 3 from 6 – 8pm

Betty Cuningham Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of a survey of drawings by Rackstraw Downes. It will be the artist's third show and first drawings show at the gallery. Included in the exhibition will be approximately twenty works on paper selected from the past thirty years. Downes will be present for an opening reception on June 3.

Due to the outdoor nature of nearly all of his work, Downes moves with the seasons, and therefore the drawings included in the exhibit cover a vast array of geographic locations: Maine where he lived in the late 70's and 80's, New York City where he currently spends seven months of the year, and Presidio, TX where he spends the winter months. As Downes does not typically prepare studies for his large scale work, most drawings are done as a means to investigate sites. As a result, the drawings have significant distinctions from the paintings, bringing to the forefront his “gift of sheer linearity” defining the objects in the scene, as stated by Sanford Schwartz in the 2005 Downes monograph, published by Princeton University Press.

Similar to his paintings, Downes creates his drawings on site, from start to finish. As he draws precisely from observation, without manipulating the scene before him, both the drawings and paintings are devoid of narrative, rhetoric or cliché. Consequently Downes selects austere sites that are not particularly picturesque from a traditional point of view and uses technicality to record the details. He is most concerned with capturing the particular light and particular time of the largest vista possible, being able to see the maximum distance in front of himself as well as to either side.

In addition to his show at **Betty Cuningham Gallery**, Rackstraw Downes will have two museum shows opening this summer. The **Parrish Art Museum**, located in Southampton, NY, will be exhibiting “Rackstraw Downes: Onsite Paintings, 1972 – 2008” from June 20 – August 8, 2010; it will then travel to the **Portland Museum of Art**, Portland, ME, and the **Weatherspoon Art Museum**, Greensboro, NC. A process show, “Rackstraw Downes: Under the Westside Highway” will be on view at **The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum**, located in Ridgefield, CT, June 27, 2010 – January 2, 2011.

Rackstraw Downes was born in Kent, England and received his BFA and MFA in Painting from Yale University. Over the course of his career, he has been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, most notably The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2009 and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 1998. In 1999 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Downes lives and works in New York City and Presidio, TX.

His work can be seen in a host of public collections, including The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; the Farnsworth Museum of Art, Rockland, ME; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

For further information and/or images, please contact the gallery.

Listing Information: Betty Cuningham Gallery is located at 541 West 25 Street, New York, NY 10001
T: 212.242.2772 F: 212.242.5959 E: info@bettycuninghamgallery.com W: www.bettycuninghamgallery.com

Public Transportation: C, E to 23rd Street

Gallery Hours: Through June 12: Tues – Sat 10am – 6pm; Summer hours begin June 15: Tues – Fri 10am – 6pm, Mon by appt

Next exhibition: Joan Snyder, on view beginning September 9; opening reception September 16, 6 – 8pm

541 WEST 25 STREET
NEW YORK NEW YORK 10001
TEL 212 242-2772
FAX 212 242-5959
BETTYCUNINGHAMGALLERY.COM