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Robert Longo

Surrendering the Absolutes

April 23 – May 30, 2009

Metro Pictures presents "Surrendering the Absolutes," an exhibition of new work by Robert Longo. Featuring a group of Longo's signature large-scale charcoal drawings, the works represent a departure from his recent serial approach to a subject and instead are linked by atmospheric sensations of light and abstracted imagery.

As the title of the show suggests, Longo is focused on the shifts of perception that an image can at once evoke and extend in relation to its environment. The centerpiece of the show is a five-panel 25-foot drawing "Untitled (Cathedral of Light)," an image of glaring sunlight flooding through massive cathedral windows. Other images include a satellite view of Tokyo, its radiating roadways appearing as shattered glass; an immense concert stage where light physically engulfs the musicians; an exterior view of the hull of an airplane, its lighted windows revealing the isolation of people in close confinement; and a lone figure walking through an eerily illuminated forest. With this group of drawings, Longo extends his unique drawing method that employs deep blackened expanses with sharply contrasting whites to include nuanced gray tones that evoke smoky hazes and softened elusive forms.

Longo will also include a new sculpture, a 12-foot tower of four black charcoal drawings framed behind glass making explicit his interest in the cacophony of reflections created in the rooms where his works hang, by both mirroring the objects in its presence and co-opting them into its black void.

Robert Longo has had solo exhibitions at Hamburger Kunstverein and Deichtorhallen, Menil Collection in Houston, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Hartford Athenaeum, Isetan Museum of Art in Tokyo, Museen Haus Lange and Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany and the Albertina Museum, Vienna. Group exhibitions include Documenta, the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale.

A survey exhibition of Longo's work will open at Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, in June of this year. His work is featured in the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition "The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984," April 20 to August 2.

In addition to the catalogue accompanying the Nice exhibition, a book of Longo's recent, large-scale drawings (from 2000 to present) from Hatje Kantz and a publication of the original photographs used for Longo's seminal "Men in the Cities" drawings from Schirmer/Mosel, are both forthcoming.

Opening: Thursday, April 23, 6 - 8 pm

Gallery hours: 10-6 pm, Tuesday – Saturday

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