

Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht

Press release

February 2009



Exile on
Main St. until August 16, 2009

Exile on Main St.

Humour, exaggeration & anarchy in American art
17 February – 16 August 2009

The exhibition *Exile on Main St.* brings together the work of nine American artists – seasoned mavericks who care nothing for the rules of the market, much less the rules of art. They have chosen the path of uncompromising freedom.

The exhibition is a celebration of that freedom. It demands a good cigar. The acrobat stands for freedom. He has broken free from banality, and his limberness is a challenge to those trussed, hidebound souls that populate the ordinary world. Yet cigars and acrobatics are normally incompatible.

In the world of gyms and workouts, cigars are gatecrashers; and there is no place for acrobatics in the world of art. Confronted long ago with this dilemma, the exhibiting artists decided to throw rigid convention overboard – for the gatecrashers were soon the life and soul of the party. The art market turned up its nose. Glossy hype was the order of the day, and the mainstream clung greedily to profit-friendly convention.

How times have changed.... Government and high finance have swapped places, and it is now the turn of bankers to grovel in the margin, with a cortège of demolished dreams and bruised burghers in their wake.

The art world is coming down to earth with a bang – for it has been engaging in much the same virtual, self-indulgent practices as the financial sector, and not a few of its cheques have bounced. Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but these days not all girls will find them so sexy.

At a time like this, it can do no harm to highlight a group of artists who have always deemed inner necessity more important than outward appearance, even if this has been a barrier to their success. *Exile on Main St.* is an attempt to rediscover art that has remained untainted by hype and

market forces. And this means venturing into the lion's den – for the cradle of mainstream convention is the United States.

The title of the exhibition reveals a quest for purity, which in itself is nothing new in art. But this time the path chosen is not 'art for art's sake', or unspoiled youth, or the fresh exoticism of Africa or China.

On the contrary, we have encountered artists who have spent a lifetime getting their hands dirty or seeking conflict, if only to give free rein to their unruliness and their carnality. Visitors should therefore not be surprised by anything they see.

The keynotes are humour, eroticism and overkill. Spirituality is changing demurely behind a screen.

Opening weekend *Exile on Main St.*, 14th & 15th February 2009:

Saturday 14th February – 5.00 pm

Introduction to the exhibition by Alexander van Grevenstein

Sunday 15th February – 2.00 pm

Richard Artschwager, Steve Gianakos, Peter Saul, John Tweddle, Joe Zucker interviewed by Alexander van Grevenstein

Exile on Main St.

Parallel

5 March – 16 July 2009

Every Thursday night, the museum is open from 8.00 to 10.30 pm

An extensive parallel programme is being organised alongside the exhibition *Exile on Main St.* It consists of three types of activity: evening meetings, a side programme of films and a theme weekend. Info: <http://www.bonnefanten.nl/en>

The *Exile on Main St. Parallel* programme has received financial support from the Mondriaan Foundation.

During the visit of the exhibition :

Mediatour

With texts in Dutch, English and German versions.

Catalogue *Exile on Main St.*

For the occasion of the exhibition a publication in English is published with an introduction by Alexander van Grevenstein and an essay by Robert Storr. A Dutch translation is available as insert.



NOTE FOR THE PRESS: you can download visual material via www.bonnefanten.nl/pers
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