

Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN: 'WITHOUT FEAR'

20 April – 21 May 2005



The Big One 1994

'The definition of a sculpture for me is stance and attitude. All sculpture takes a stance. If it dances on one foot, or, even if it dances while sitting down, it has a light-on-its feet stance.'

John Chamberlain

Waddington Galleries is pleased to present an exhibition of sculptures by John Chamberlain. The exhibition of twelve painted and chromium plated steel sculptures dating from 1988 to 2003 offers an overview of Chamberlain's artistic development over the last two decades.

In search of 'the right fit', Chamberlain interlocks literally and organically steel bands which have been cut, folded, crushed, twisted and rolled. Chamberlain nearly always uses similar materials and techniques and yet each painterly sculpture has its own character especially in his experiments with surface and colour. By spraying, stencilling, dribbling, graffitiing, and airbrushing layers of brilliant hues, multicoloured rectangular daubs and animal prints onto the steel, Chamberlain creates jazzy, tropical, and even raucous effects.

The opposing inherent qualities of Chamberlain's sculpture can be seen in a work such as *The Big One* (1994). It appears dynamic, playful, airy and fragile from one angle, but massive, static, serious and robust from another. Klaus Kertess describes the sculptures as 'engaged in intimate play by his (Chamberlain's) hands in a kind of trial and error mating dance, continuing until two shapes are compatibly joined—and then another is coaxed to participate and then another...[in] a kind of agitated visual orgy....Seldom has sculpture so physically embodied the free associativeness and combinative play so crucial to creative thinking visually and verbally'.

John Chamberlain was born on 16 April 1927, in Rochester, Indiana. From 1943-46 he served in the U.S. Navy. He attended The Art Institute of Chicago, 1951-52, before studying at Black Mountain College, North Carolina, 1955-56. His first major solo exhibition was held at the Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, in 1960. In 1964, his work was exhibited at the Venice Biennale. In the 1960s as well as making sculpture from car parts, Chamberlain also experimented with other mediums including foam, fibreglass, latex and plexiglass. In 1971, he had a retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. His next major retrospective was in 1986 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. In 1993, Chamberlain received both the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, and the Lifetime Achievement Award in Contemporary Sculpture from the International Sculpture Centre, Washington, D.C. He was elected a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York in 1990 and received the Distinction in Sculpture Honour from the Sculpture Center, New York, in 1999. The artist currently lives and works in Shelter Island Heights, Long Island, New York.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany this exhibition.

For further information and images, please contact Louise Kybert

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