

# Waddington Galleries

PRESS RELEASE

## SUSAN ROTHENBERG

29 October - 22 November 2003

Waddington Galleries are pleased to present an exhibition of ten recent paintings by the American artist Susan Rothenberg.

Susan Rothenberg came to prominence in 1975 when her emblematic paintings of horses were first shown at 112 Greene Street, New York. In 1979 she was included in "New Image Painting" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and within a few years had gained an international reputation with solo exhibitions in Basle and Amsterdam, and with her participation in the landmark exhibition "Zeitgeist" in Berlin in 1982. As one of the leading artists to be associated with the new painting of the early 1980s, she commanded respect for her dedication in pursuing her own path. Moving on from the formal rigour of the horse paintings, Rothenberg allowed her work to draw deeper on personal experience and to become more intimate in the process. A change from acrylic to oils led to a looser style of painting that incorporated blobs and drips and allowed the figure and ground to dissolve into one another. She has also become steadily more interested in assessing the painterly opportunities presented by artists of the past, as she explained recently, 'I'm looking back more than ever at my modernist masters - I want to play in their court for a while...to take on what they took on.'

Her recent paintings on the theme of the studio bear out the confidence with which she tackles the classic themes of modern art. Unlike Matisse, Braque, or her fellow American, Philip Guston, each of whom brought their full weight to bear on the theme of the studio, Rothenberg's paintings do not immediately reveal their subject. Her approach, like her style of painting, is open-ended, reflective, unhurried, and subtly avoids the specific. These grand interiors draw us in slowly to the world of the artist, a world in which the studio is seen as a place for reading, looking, contemplating - all vital activities as far as Rothenberg is concerned.

Her choice of the studio as a subject was encouraged by looking again at the paintings of Van Gogh who, she says, gave her the thought of 'approaching my house, my studio with some passion.' As she explained recently, 'I feel a tremendous affinity with Van Gogh's deep feeling for the things he painted and how he exaggerated the colours of the sky, chairs, faces, to bring them to almost more than life.' The three large studio paintings in this exhibition, each painted in one of the primary colours, yellow, green and red, approach their subject with an equally passionate conviction.

Susan Rothenberg was born in 1945 in Buffalo, New York. After studying at Cornell University, she briefly enrolled at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C., before moving to New York where she studied dance with Deborah Hay and Joan Jonas. Since the mid 1970s she has consolidated her position as one of the leading painters of her generation with major retrospective exhibitions in the USA and Mexico. This year she was awarded the Rolf Schock Prize for the Visual Arts.

Susan Rothenberg lives and works in New Mexico.

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies this exhibition

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