

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KEITH EDMIER
NEW SCULPTURE**

NOVEMBER 11, 2004 – JANUARY 15, 2005

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 11, 6 – 9 pm

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculpture by Keith Edmier. Edmier is known for work that fuses collective memory with personal narrative. He is a romantic, making work that has elements of theatricality and wonderment brought about by a nuanced appreciation for the world that we inhabit.

This exhibition is the culmination of Edmier's three-year odyssey to create a new method of casting sculpture using molten lava. Initially, he traveled to Hawaii to study the material first hand. Unable to use the naturally occurring lava in Hawaii, Edmier worked with the staff at the University of South Florida's Graphicstudio to develop a process to melt and cast basalt lava in a foundry. The sculptures continue Edmier's allegory about nature, offering a meditation on primordial life, death and regeneration, sexuality, and the process of casting. They also present a familial structure, and unlike previous bodies of work, the perspective is now from that of a parent rather than a child.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is titled *Cycas Orogeny*. It is a sculpture of two cycads cast from life, radiating from the center of interlocking pools of lava, which contain negative impressions also obtained from real cycads. The plants are essentially growing out of shells of their former selves. Edmier chose to use cycads as they are palm-like plants that have lived on earth for millions of years, male and female plants exhibiting distinct and almost primitive sexual characteristics. Accompanying *Cycas Orogeny* is a sculpture of a life-sized male seahorse, the largest specimen in nature, the hippocampus abdominalis, which can grow to be over a foot long. Its tail coils around a single piece of soft coral commonly known as a "Devil's Sea Whip." The coral functions as an umbilical cord, connecting the seahorse to the basalt of *Cycas Orogeny*, basalt being the substrate of all coral on earth.

Edmier's work can also currently be seen at the Kunsthalle Vienna in *Precarious Sculpture*, and The Louisiana Museum, Copenhagen in *The Flower as Image - From Monet to Jeff Koons*.

For more information please contact the gallery at 212.680.9467 or info@petzel.com.