

press release

## JAMES WELLING

**19 April – 20 May 2007**

**private view: Thursday 19 April 6.00 - 8.00 pm**

Maureen Paley is pleased to present an exhibition of photographs by the American artist, James Welling. In 2006, Welling was included in group exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal; and P.S.1, New York. He has two one-person exhibitions currently on view in New York at David Zwirner and the New York Horticultural Society.

This will be Welling's first solo exhibition at Maureen Paley. It will include selections from four bodies of work: from 2006 - *Flowers* and *Authors*, from 2005 - *Degradés*, and from 1981 - *Drapery Photographs*.

In *Flowers* Welling continues to work with photograms, (cameraless photographs) of flowers, a project he began in 2004. The most recent *Flowers* are larger in scale and have a greater range of colours than those in past works. To produce these works Welling placed small irregularly-shaped colour filters behind the negative as he printed the images. In an interview with the artist the novelist/ critic Lynne Tillman notes that these *Flowers* "argue for a present-ness of the photograph." Rather than pointing to a specific moment in the past, these nearly-abstract images encourage the viewer to discover new meanings while in the presence of the work.

In his *Degradés* series Welling again uses photograms, but in this case it is in order to create purely abstract images of colour fields. Here Welling avoids both the camera and the negative, directly exposing coloured light onto paper. Unlike most photographs these images are unique.

With the *Authors* Welling looks to the past. His fascination with the 19th century has been apparent since his earliest photographs and here he names the nine photographs in the series after 19th-century writers – Alcott, Dickinson, Emerson, Fuller, and Whitman among them. He is also mining his past by using negatives he made in 1986 but now printing them in negative with colours which for him, symbolise the 19th century.

The final body of work in the exhibition consists of recent prints of photographs originally made in 1981. Derived from negatives similar to those of the *Author* series, the *Drapery Photographs* were first shown at Metro Pictures in 1982. Originally associated with photographs by such artists as Richard Prince, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, and Cindy Sherman, these seminal works laid the ground for his and others' more recent explorations of abstraction.

A catalogue is available with a conversation between Lynne Tillman and James Welling. Welling currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

**Gallery opening hours: Wednesday to Sunday 11.00 - 6.00 and by appointment.**

For further information please contact Katie Guggenheim at [katie@maureenpaley.com](mailto:katie@maureenpaley.com).