

VANCOUVER, BC — The Vancouver Art Gallery will present the first Canadian exhibition of work by German artist Kai Althoff from November 8, 2008 to February 15, 2009. Kai Althoff focuses on the artist's most recent artistic production, including new resin and iron sculptures, several collaborative projects and a re-envisioned environment from the 4th Berlin Biennale, along with a selection of celebrated earlier works. Co-curated by Vancouver Art Gallery director Kathleen Bartels and guest curator Jennifer Volland, the exhibition presents a compelling body of work that reveals Althoff's fluid stylistic approach and masterful ability to capture the complexities and intricacies of life with intimacy and insight.

“The diversity of Althoff's practice, particularly his sensitive execution of paintings and drawings with their references to history, popular culture and religion, makes him one of the most important artists working today,” said Vancouver Art Gallery director Kathleen Bartels. “After seeing his work in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago in 2004 and the Kunsthalle Zürich in 2007, I knew the work of this accomplished international artist would form a new and engaging kind of exhibition for the Vancouver Art Gallery.”

Althoff was born in 1966 in Cologne, Germany. Based in the city of his birth, the artist travels extensively for his individual and collaborative endeavors, exhibiting his work both nationally and internationally. His artistic output encompasses a vast spectrum of media, including works on paper, painting, photography, music, videos, text, performances and installations. Althoff is also co-founder of the German band Workshop, which figured largely in his early artistic practice and whose namesake—a place of individual and collaborative creative production—remains a recurring theme in his work.

During the 1990s, Althoff maintained a strong presence in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. With his exhibition *Impulse* (2001) at New York's Anton Kern Gallery and his inclusion in the Museum of Modern Art's landmark exhibition *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* (2002), Althoff's international stature blossomed. While these exhibitions gained him a reputation for painting and drawing, it was the artist's first major museum survey at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston—*Kai Kein Respekt (Kai No Respect)* (2004)—that showed audiences the breadth of his exceptionally diverse artistic production.

Central to the Vancouver Art Gallery's presentation of Kai Althoff is the idea of collaboration, a process intrinsic to and pervasive in Althoff's oeuvre. The exhibition presents two new major collaborative works, including the dance-theatre piece *I will be last*, envisioned, directed and performed by Althoff and Alexandra Tuttle, Bridget Donahue, Brett Milspaw, Sahra Motalebi and

Travis Joseph Meinolf. Also on view is the collaborative installation titled *The Weaving Place*, created with San Francisco-based artist Travis Joseph Meinolf. For this installation Althoff designed an environment to display and experience Meinolf's art and ideas, which focus on the creation of textiles as a way to explore issues related to the production and distribution of consumer goods. Central to the installation is Meinolf's invention, the Laser-Loom—a simple weaving unit created to democratize the fabrication and use of textiles.

A selection of previously shown works is also featured, providing a contextual and historical basis for the artist's practice. Included is a partial recreation of *Kolten Flynn*, 2006, a mixed media environment created by Althoff and fellow German artist Lutz Braun for the 4th Berlin Biennial. For this site-specific project, Althoff and Braun lived in an empty office space in a German Democratic Republic-era building in Berlin, and simply let the installation process unfold, blurring the distinction between the act of production and the act of living. Also included are more than 30 of the artist's deeply narrative paintings and drawings dating from 1991 to 2007 borrowed from private and public collections in the United States and Europe. In its entirety, the exhibition abandons the strategy of straightforward survey in favour of a more complex juxtaposition of components, in order to allow subtle connections to be revealed throughout the visitor's experience of the space.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*