

contemporaryartsmuseum houston



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**The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents post-apocalyptic
worlds imagined by Berlin-based artist Torsten Slama**

Perspectives 166: Torsten Slama

Opening reception: May 14, 2009, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Torsten Slama to speak at 6:30 p.m.

On view: May 15-July 26, 2009



Torsten Slama, *Walt-Whitman-Gedenk-Raffinerie (Walt Whitman Memorial Refinery)*, 2005. Ink on illustration board. 28 3/4 x 40 1/4 inches. Courtesy the artist

Houston, TX—The first solo museum exhibition of the work of innovative, Berlin-based artist Torsten Slama, *Perspectives 166* will feature a selection of approximately 35 large drawings, paintings, and works in airbrush on paper. Slama's architectural and landscape scenes and his figurative images are filled with meticulous detail and mysterious narratives. The works often depict post-

apocalyptic worlds filled with abandoned avant-garde architecture, esoteric technology, and humans engaged in symbolically charged psychodramas.

Employing an unsettling and captivating style of Magic Realism, Slama's works share the vertiginous perspectives of traditional Chinese landscape painting and the scathing satire of German *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or "New Objectivity," painters and drawers like George Grosz and Otto Dix. Slama's concerns, however, collapse past and future to reflect the perennial forces shaping individuals and civilizations.

Often featuring titles referencing psychology and poetry, works like *Wilhelm Reich Cryogenic Institute* (*Kryogenisches Institut "Wilhelm Reich"*), *Encounter with the Authority Figure* (*Begegnung mit der Autoritätsfigur*), and *The Walt Whitman Memorial Refinery* (*Walt-Whitman-Gedenk-Raffinerie*) propose uncanny worlds and encounters saturated with meaning and menace. They share the eerie stillness of Surrealist landscapes by Yves Tanguy and the sardonic humor of portraits by Christian Schad. Slama's images of failed utopias and eternal interpersonal struggles, conjure a mood that is at once grandiose and abject.

"Slama's wryly humorous and archly symbolic objects and characters present an original and irreverent take on the brave new worlds imagined by generations of radical thinkers," says exhibition curator Toby Kamps. "His works are cutting emblems for our post-industrial, post-Freudian, and post-Modernist era."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Torsten Slama was born in 1967 in Schwarzach, Austria, and educated at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany. His work has been included in solo exhibitions at the Vera Gliem Gallery, Cologne; Hotel Gallery, London; and Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg. He has also been featured in group exhibitions at Museum de Hallen, Haarlem, The Netherlands; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York. Slama lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

All the following events are free and open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston unless otherwise noted. Please check www.camh.org for additional programming and information.

Opening reception: *Perspectives 166: Torsten Slama*

Thursday, May 14, 6:30-9:00 PM

6:30 PM: Gallery walkthrough with Berlin-based artist Torsten Slama

7:00-9:00 PM: Opening reception

Perspectives Talk: Gus Kopriva

Thursday, June 18, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for a discussion about German expressionist art with the author of *Broken Brushes: German Art from the Kaiser to Hitler* and director of Redbud Gallery in Houston, Gus Kopriva.

Perspectives Talk: Toby Kamps

Thursday, July 16, 6:30 p.m.

Toby Kamps, senior curator at CAMH and curator of *Perspectives 166: Torsten Slama*, discusses the exhibition.

PUBLICATION

Perspectives 166: Torsten Slama will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue containing explanatory texts on the featured works, biographic and bibliographic information, and an essay on the artist by Contemporary Arts Museum Houston Senior Curator Toby Kamps.

Perspectives catalogues are made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

EXHIBITION FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The *Perspectives* Series is made possible by major grants from Fayez Sarofim; The Studio, the young professionals group of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; and by donors to the Museum's *Perspectives* Fund: Anonymous Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene, Susie and Sanford Criner, Heidi and David Gerger, Leslie and Mark Hull, Kerry Inman and Denby Auble, Belinda Phelps and Randy Howard, and William F. Stern. Additional support provided by the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Houston, and Galerie Vera Gliem, Cologne.

EDUCATION SUPPORT

The Museum receives support for its education programs from: M.D. Anderson Foundation, Baker Hughes Foundation, Chevron U.S.A. Inc., Louise D. Jamail, Marian and Speros Martel Foundation Endowment, Nordstrom, Inc.

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GENERAL SUPPORT

The Museum's operations and programs are made possible through the generosity of the Museum's trustees, patrons, members and donors. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston receives partial operating support from the Houston Endowment, Inc., the City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Continental is the official airline of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

CAMH MISSION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is an idea and a place shaped by the present moment. The Museum exemplifies the dynamic relationship between contemporary art and contemporary society through its exhibitions, public and educational programs, and publications. The CAMH provides the physical and intellectual framework essential to the presentation, interpretation, and advancement of contemporary art; it is a vibrant forum for artists and all audiences, and for critical, scholarly, and public discourse.

ALWAYS FRESH, ALWAYS FREE!

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Thursdays to 9:00 PM, and Sundays noon to 5:00 PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit www.camh.org or call (713) 284-8250.