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March 10, 2004

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Press Preview: Wednesday, October 6, 2004, at 10 am

INVENTIONS:
Recent Paintings by Caio Fonseca

at the Corcoran Gallery of Art
October 9, 2004 – February 14, 2005

Washington, DC – *INVENTIONS: Recent Paintings by Caio Fonseca* marks the first solo presentation of the artist's work in a U.S. museum. The exhibition features large-scale paintings and works on paper, specifically created for this exhibition. These works were painted in Manhattan and in the Tuscan village of Pietrasanta where Fonseca has maintained a studio since 1985. *INVENTIONS: Recent Paintings by Caio Fonseca* is on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art from October 9, 2004 through February 14, 2005.



Caio Fonseca, *Pietrasanta Painting C03.55*, 2003, mixed media on canvas, Courtesy of the artist

Resulting from 25 years of sustained studio practice and rigorous technique, Fonseca's rhythmic abstractions use a methodology he has honed over time. To begin each work, Fonseca marks his canvas in charcoal, establishing proportions according to the Golden Section.

“Choosing the ground on which I'm going to start the painting has important implications,” he says. “It's like choosing the key you're using for a piece of music.

The choice determines the tonal range of the colors I might use.” He then puts down

a color composition – over which he paints and discovers his forms. “My abstractions are thoroughly non-narrative, but I place enormous emphasis on animating the forms to give them a self-sustaining life,” says the artist. “I strive for a balance of irreducible elements – a mysterious sense of processional movement.”

With their sensuous color, tactile surfaces and structured compositions, Fonseca's paintings speak in a rich vocabulary of elemental forms, which resonate with the surrounding world. Fonseca's compositions maintain a harmonious and delicate lyricism.

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“The paintings reveal themselves as a complex of layers and inversions: they’re made, not from the ground up, but up to the ground,” says art critic Daniel Kunitz. “He strips away inessentials to find unalloyed forms by a cumulative procedure, building up the layers. He eliminates by adding.”



Caio Fonseca working in his studio in Pietrasanta

What is altogether new in this body of work is Fonseca’s use of connecting bands of color that when revealed through the final surface, constitute a novel way to link forms and explain the movement in his paintings. After the first layer, or ground, Fonseca distributes these marks of paint, which loop, dive or soar across the canvas. From this potential, Fonseca then defines the forms in his paintings through an instinctual process of subtraction.

“These recent paintings are not dependant on drawing,” he explains. “It is impossible to plan the eventual forms of these compositions – an intuitive solution can’t be planned.” He unifies the forms by scratching into the wet paint, making subtle connections between elements using tools collected from cooks, dentists and piano tuners.

“Fonseca is also an accomplished classical pianist and there is a definite musicality evident in his work,” notes Corcoran Chief Curator Jacquelyn Serwer. “But he also continues the tradition of the great modern painters, such as Seurat, Mondrian and Rothko, who revel in both the Dionysian qualities of the pigment and the Apollonian order of a balanced and structured composition.”

Born in 1959 and raised in New York City, Fonseca painted in Barcelona, Paris, and Italy from 1979 to 1990. His work is included in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Smithsonian Institution, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Art, Houston; several United States Embassies, including the U. S. mission to the United Nations, as well as numerous major national and international collections. In addition, he has completed mural commissions for architect Cesar Pelli at Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC and for Renzo Piano’s Bovis Lend Lease building, Aurora Place, in Sydney, Australia.

RELATED MONOGRAPH

The Institut Valencià d’Art Modern (IVAM), accompanying a survey, produced a comprehensive monograph of Fonseca’s work in 2003. *Caio Fonseca: Paintings 1983 – 2003* features texts by Daniel Kunitz and Teresa Millet and includes 129 color plates. The hardcover catalogue is available on Amazon.com

PRESS PREVIEW

A press preview of the exhibition is scheduled for Wednesday, October 6, 2004, from 10 am to noon. For more information, or to RSVP, please call the Corcoran's Public Affairs Office at (202) 639-1703 or email PR@corcoran.org.

PRESS IMAGES

High resolution digital images are available to press via the Corcoran's FTP site (www.corcoran.org/press). To obtain login information and a password, please contact the Corcoran Public Affairs Office at PR@corcoran.org or (202) 639-1703.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION & SPONSORSHIP

INVENTIONS: Recent Paintings by Caio Fonseca is organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art and supported by The President's Exhibition Fund.

ABOUT THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

A privately funded institution, the Corcoran Gallery of Art was founded in 1869 as Washington's first museum of art. It is known internationally for its distinguished collection of historical and modern American art as well as European painting, sculpture, photography and decorative arts. Founded in 1890, Corcoran College of Art + Design is Washington's only 4-year college of art and design offering BFA degrees in Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Digital Media Design, Photojournalism and Photography-and AFA degrees in Fine Arts, Interior Design and Photography. The College's Continuing Education Program, which offers part-time credit and non-credit classes for children and adults, draws more than 3,500 participants each year.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art is located at New York Avenue and 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, and is open every day, except Tuesday, 10 am - 5 pm and until 9 pm on Thursday. The Corcoran is closed every Tuesday. Admission to the Corcoran is: \$6.75 for adults; \$4.75 for senior citizens; \$3 for students with current ID; and \$12 for families. Free for Members and children under 12. Admission is "pay as you wish" on Monday all day and on Thursday after 5 pm. The public information line for the museum is (202) 639-1700. The information line for the college is (202) 639-1800. The Corcoran Web site address is www.corcoran.org.

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