

TUCCI RUSSO STUDIO PER L'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA
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ROBIN RHODE “PROMENADE”

Opening: Saturday, 10th May 2008, 6.30 – 8.30 p.m.
Until 3rd August 2008
From Wednesday to Sunday: 10.30 a.m - 1 p.m. / 3 – 7 p.m.

PRESS RELEASE

For his first solo show in Italy, *Promenade*, South African born artist Robin Rhode will present new works, all of which were realised on-site at Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea. Rhode creates an atmosphere of limbo achieved through the construct and combination of the works in the exhibition: paintings, drawings, animation, and photography are executed in monochrome black and white, illustrating not just the passing and suspension of time, but also its transcendence.

The influence of music and sound scores has been a consistent factor in Rhode's practice. Since the realization of his earlier low-fi animations, the affect of music has matured and developed coming forth as a focal point for this exhibition. *Promenade* refers to the segments or chapters of a piano concerto or composition; in Rhode's *Promenade*, the compositional structure becomes visual, one that shifts from picture to picture.

Rhode's work is characterized by the use of a magical realism and imaginative space; by the idea that anything, even the most mundane or discarded, can be activated with imagination. The title animation acts as an introduction to a show—its overture—with Rhode's protagonist playing the master of ceremonies, introducing, in this case, animated geometric forms that first reframe the protagonist within autonomous settings and structures before engulfing the character in a tide of geometric constellations. The animation is the first that Rhode has created for a project that is underway in celebration of the 80th anniversary of Mussorsky's piano concerto "Pictures at an Exhibition", scheduled to debut at the Lincoln Center in New York November 2009 and to travel worldwide through 2011.

In addition to the animation, Rhode will present single panel photographs titled *Keys* that acts as a freeze frame of the protagonist playing a piano – in this instance pieces of chalk are arranged in the form of ivory piano keys (for the naturals) against a black table (for the sharps or flats). Rhode brings to effect the relation between the process of musical composition and the act of drawing.

Paintings and drawings are a driving force in Rhode's practice and in this exhibition brought to the fore. The idea of geometric abstraction and form in his new photographic works and animations has

progressed to become an integral part of his practice, one that has led him to the creation of stand-alone works on paper or canvas. Drawings suspended from the ceiling, seemingly floating within the room, are a flash of the imaginary, details of situations drawn in the animation works. Rhode's installation invites the viewer into this concrete imagery to become part of the show itself. The objects or forms drawn with chalk or spray-painted with stencils become an imaginary reality; the fantasy of the situation becomes real.

Tucci Russo Gallery presented Rhode's work in the group-exhibition *S.N.O.W. Sculpture in Non-Objective Way* curated by Andrea Bellini in 2005, where the artist realized works at the Tucci studio made from various medias. Photographic series, films and animations were all included in the 2005 presentation. *Promenade* is Robin Rhode's first solo show at Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea.