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October 2008

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CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS PRESENTS

GEDI SIBONY: My Arms Are Tied Behind My Other Arms

JANUARY 23 – APRIL 19, 2009



Partly Me Manners, 2008. Door and paper, 88 x 24 x 4 inches.
Vanmoerkerke Collection, Belgium. Courtesy of Greene Naftali Gallery, New York.

St. Louis, MO —In January 2009, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents the first monographic museum exhibition with New York-based artist Gedi Sibony: *My Arms Are Tied Behind My Other Arms*. Along with a selection of the artist's recent pieces, including the carefully balanced *Partly Me Manners* (2008) and the multi-part *Probably Eight or Half of Each* (2007), the exhibition features major new works in a site-specific installation for the Contemporary's Main Galleries.

Sibony challenges the sculptural demands of space, weight, and materiality. Retrieved objects—carpeting, cardboard, vertical blinds, plywood, hollow-core doors, metal pipes, and fragments of salvaged scraps—form

the physical backbone of his process. While the prominence Sibony gives to castaway materials might suggest a destitute spirit of decay and ruin, his sculptures are elegant, graceful, and human. If they seem wobbly and discreet, the playful, finished pieces are arranged in space with boldness and precision. Mixing subtlety and wit, the artist pushes a sense of the “almost” to an extreme: the objects are almost invisible, almost solid, almost blank. He often leaves his materials as he found them, making only slight changes in placement and shape that seem accidental. What emerge are the fundamental power of bare essentials and the effortless magic of the mundane.



Gedi Sibony, installation view, Greater New York 2005, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York. Courtesy of Greene Naftali Gallery, New York.

Sibony’s work addresses political and ecological concerns in addition to sculptural ones. His materials are unneeded objects, but salvaged before they become trash. His economy of means add nothing to an existing state of industrial over-abundance. His sculptures are something new for the world, but don’t use up many of its resources. Sibony gathers what comes his way and redistributes it efficiently.

With so little to look at, the heightened viewing experience itself takes on a prominent role. The appearance of a new shadow or a small change in perspective allows one impression to slip towards another. What initially seems fragile becomes musical, and what looks forgotten turns out to be closely related to nearby works. Using light, silence, and hints of humor, Sibony’s work achieves a nonchalant awkwardness, a proud nudity, and an overall implausibility. Art, just like life, isn’t a safe destination but an always-incomplete process of finding whatever we want to find, and Sibony steers his viewers towards the hidden but omnipresent harmonies in the world.

A monographic catalogue published with JRP-Ringier accompanies the exhibition and includes an introduction by the curator, an essay by French curator François Quintin, and an interview with the artist by Dia Art Foundation Director Philippe Vergne.

Gedi Sibony: My Arms Are Tied Behind My Other Arms is organized by Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis Chief Curator Anthony Huberman.

Support for Gedi Sibony: My Arms Are Tied Behind My Other Arms is generously provided by Charlotte and Bill Ford, Peter and Jill Kraus, and Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg. Special thanks to Greene Naftali Gallery, New York; Art: Concept, Paris; and Galleria Zero, Milan. General support for the Contemporary's exhibitions program is generously provided by the Whitaker Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; William E. Weiss Foundation; Regional Arts Commission; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Arts and Education Council; Nancy Reynolds and Dwyer Brown; and members of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Over the past few years, Sibony's work has become increasingly visible in prominent group exhibitions such as Greater New York 2005 at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the 2006 Whitney Biennial, and, more recently, the New Museum's inaugural exhibition Unmonumental in New York, underlining the contemporary relevance of his practice. The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is the first to recognize Gedi Sibony in a significant one-person museum exhibition. Other recent one person exhibitions include FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2008); Kunsthalle St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland (2007); Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2007); and gallery exhibitions at Galerie Neu, Berlin (2008); Greene Naftali, New York (2008), Zero..., Milan (2008); and art:concept, Paris (2007). Sibony was born in 1973 in New York, New York.

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS

With a vision of presenting the most relevant and experimental developments in contemporary art and developing successful community partnerships, education programs and outreach initiatives, the Contemporary makes the arts available to wide and diverse audiences throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. Founded as the Forum for Contemporary Art in 1980, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis re-opened with a new 25,000 square foot building in 2003.

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