



GEMINI G.E.L. AT JONI MOISANT WEYL

NEW YEAR, NEW WORK

Featuring New Editions by Cecily Brown and Ann Hamilton

FEBRUARY 2—APRIL 1, 2006

On the surface, contemporary artists Cecily Brown (English, born 1969) and Ann Hamilton (American, born 1956) don't have much in common. Hamilton is best known for her ephemeral installations, and Brown is associated with the revival of painting. The two artists, however, do share a commonality. Both have chosen to create editions at the Gemini G.E.L. workshop in Los Angeles, taking advantage of this unique workshop's ability to cater to artists' individual creative visions for 40 years. The editions created in 2005 by Brown and Hamilton are on view at Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl from February 2—April 1, 2006 in "New Year, New Work" which features *reach*, a sculptural project by Hamilton, and three new prints by Brown.

Cecily Brown studied in London at the Slade School of Fine Art, graduating in 1993. As a painter Brown felt remote from the 'Young British Artist' phenomenon dominating London, so in 1994 she moved to New York. Her first work to gain recognition was the animated film *Four Letter Heaven* (1995), which had its premiere at the Telluride Film Festival and then toured Europe and the USA. In it she introduced themes that were to become central to her work: pornography, the depiction of flesh, and the sensuality of paint. Her first paintings were large-scale depictions of bodies in orgiastic, semi-abstract sprawls. Her paintings have been compared to those of Willem de Kooning, Francis Bacon and Sue Williams, given her attention to bodies in space painted in an expressionistic manner. The surfaces of her canvases are often varnished, so that the viewer is held back from their intense images.

The desire to come perilously close to a definitive image without losing the potential for it being read as something else takes a new direction in Brown's new Gemini prints. For example, in *Aujourd'hui Rose*, Brown was inspired by the visual mirroring of 19th century popular prints and playing cards, and the print suggests an image of two women in profile, facing one another and seemingly engaged in some polite domestic activity. Seen from a distance, the figures of the two women are cavernous eye sockets in a skull, their embroidery, a dark nasal cavity, and their petticoats, part of the skull's fleshless mouth. A pictorial *vanitas* of sorts, it suggests the fleetingness of visual sensations and the duplicity of appearances.

Ann Hamilton's project began in March 2004, with a visit to the Gemini workshop. Intent on making sculptural works, Hamilton asked workshop manager James Reid to provide her with modeling clay from which she could create forms. Spoons had long been a fascination for Hamilton, and quickly the elongated objects took shape. She was very clear that the spoon should fit in the length of her arm – that the handles should be approximately an ellsworth (the distance from the hand to the elbow). Because the handles would be long and narrow, a bent-wire structure roughly establishing the length of the handle was made first, and then Hamilton pressed clay around the wire. The spoon had to be – as Hamilton expressed it – "palm-sized." It had to be "a spoon for more than peas – a spoon to scoop up language." Moreover, the central hole in each spoon took on the shape of mouth-openings. (In a body of work that preceded the completion of these spoons,



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Hamilton had used her mouth as a pinhole camera and stood face to face with a friend or new acquaintance, quickly opening her mouth and exposing small sections of 35mm film to light. These photo-portraits exist in small unique photographs and a series of Gemini photo-gravures dating from 2003.)

The spoons, with their noticeably long, pinched handles are reminiscent of Giacometti figures, and it was clear that Hamilton wanted the finished object to appear much more primitive. After casting the spoons in plastic simply so that all of the formal details of the spoon could be inspected and reviewed, the search for the proper material in which to cast the spoons began in earnest. Bronze, silver, and aluminum were all tried, and finally ferris steel became the chosen material. A rusted appearance was always of interest, and Hamilton pursued it vigorously, instructing Reid to let the spoons rust as much as possible. Now they finally evoked the desired memories – of old archeological objects dug up by an intrepid explorer, of things hand-crafted in far-away lands in some distant past.

GEMINI G.E.L. AT JONI MOISANT WEYL was established in 1984 as the New York gallery exhibiting and representing the publications of the Los Angeles-based artists' workshop, Gemini G.E.L. The gallery shows new editions as they are published, and has mounted many historical survey exhibitions, including *Ellsworth Kelly: Diagonals and Panels 1970-1990*; *Claes Oldenburg: Editions in Two and Three Dimensions 1969-1995*; *Robert Rauschenberg: Booster and 7 Studies*; *Frank Stella: Prints from the 1960's & 70's*; and *Artists at Gemini G.E.L.: In Celebration of Gemini's 25th Anniversary*. The gallery frequently schedules special events in conjunction with its exhibitions, such as "Q & A"s with the artist and private docented tours through related museum retrospectives.

Gemini G.E.L. began in 1966 as an artists' workshop and publisher of hand-printed limited edition lithographs. Responding to the expanding interests of its artists, work began on its first sculpture edition in 1968 with Claes Oldenburg's *Profile Airflow*, and in 1970, Frank Stella's *Pastel Stack* was started as the first project in the screenprinting workshop. The etching workshop opened in 1977 and woodcuts were being made by 1980.

At Gemini, the artists do all of the drawing or carving themselves directly onto the printing element, be it limestone, copper plate, woodblock or otherwise. The artist stays at the workshop until a "RTP" (Right to Print) is achieved. Edition printing may take several months and each proof in the edition must closely match the approved RTP. Once the printing is completed, the artist returns to the workshop to examine and sign the edition. Each print is signed and numbered by the artist as well as embossed with the Gemini "chop".

In 1981, the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. honored Gemini with the establishment of a permanent archive. The archive functions as a study center for collectors and scholars, and contains a complete history of the workshop. Included in the archive is one proof from each of the over 2000 editions produced, as well as ancillary materials such as shop records and printing elements. Three major touring exhibitions with works from the archive have been organized and exhibited by the National Gallery. An online catalogue raisonné, on view at the National Gallery's website (www.nga.gov/gemini), provides detailed information on the history of the workshop and all of the artworks in the Gemini archive.

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