

October 21, 2008

PRESS RELEASE

DAVID BATES: THE STORM

Exhibition Dates: November 1 – 29, 2008
Opening Reception: Saturday, November 1st, 6 – 8 pm in conjunction with Prospect.1 New Orleans
Location: Arthur Roger Gallery, 434 Julia St., New Orleans, LA 70130
Gallery Hours: Monday - Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm
Contact Info: 504.522.1999; www.arthurorogergallery.com

ARTHUR ROGER@434 is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition “The Storm,” a series of new paintings based on the Hurricane Katrina disaster by Texas-based artist David Bates. The exhibition will be on view November 1st – 29th, 2008 at the Arthur Roger 434, located at 434 Julia Street. David Bates will be in attendance at the opening reception hosted by the gallery on Saturday, November 1st, from 6 to 8 pm.

The works by Bates included in “The Storm” are the artist’s personal response to the disaster of Hurricane Katrina. A full-color catalogue featuring an essay by curator and contemporary art professor Daniel A. Siedell accompanies the exhibition. An excerpt from this essay explains David Bates’ motivation when creating this series:

It was this urgent sense that something was passing away—that it would never be the same—that struck Bates while he watched the horror of Hurricane Katrina embodied by those poor souls whose lives were destroyed. New Orleans was an important place for Bates. He traveled there often as a young man to visit friends, frequent blues festivals, and attend Mardi Gras. And now it was gone, its existence confined to his memories. New Orleans is still there. But it will never be the same.

But what struck Bates more than his own loss, were the unbelievable stories of those victims he watched on television: the incredible fight for survival, the absurdly tragic stories, the sadness, the human loss. As they told their stories, he knew that they and their stories would soon be forgotten. And, as he has said elsewhere, “without our memories, what do we have?” Even memories of grief assert and preserve the integrity of the individual. And even if these memories are tragic, the faces that speak them, that live them, nonetheless deserve to be preserved if nothing else as means to preserve the dignity of their humanity.

And so Bates set to work, sketching the portraits of those victims whose stories were being told on television.

The paintings in this series consist of small and large oil paintings on canvas, as well as watercolor and charcoal works on paper. Many of the paintings consist solely of human faces, stripped down to powerful expressions of grief, sadness, anger and frustration over their jobs, their homes, and especially their city. With such profound emotion, Bates brings to life the emotional toll on the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Robin’s Gardenias I & II are two exceptional oil paintings that are the result of a New Orleans family close to the artist thoughtfully bringing gardenias to Bates’ 2006 exhibition at the Arthur Roger Gallery, originally scheduled for the fall of 2005 but delayed due to the ravages of Katrina. Concurrently with this exhibition, his riveting epic triptych, The Storm, is on view at the Arthur Roger Gallery Project in the Renaissance Arts Hotel as part of the Katrina: Catastrophe and Catharsis exhibition.

David Bates was born in Dallas, Texas and continues to live there. He attended Southern Methodist University, where he received a B.F.A. in 1975 and a M.F.A. in 1978. In 1987 his work was included in the prestigious Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. His paintings and sculpture have been acquired by many museums including the Dallas Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, and the San Francisco Museum of Art. In 2007 the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth, in association with Scala Publishers, published a comprehensive monograph entitled David Bates, which includes over one hundred full-color illustrations of Bates’ works on paper, paintings, and sculpture from his thirty-year career.

For more information please contact the Arthur Roger Gallery at 504.522.1999 or visit our website arthurorogergallery.com.