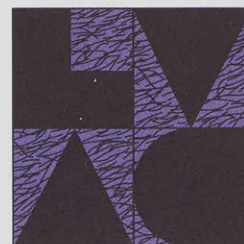


N E W S R E L E A S E



MARK TANSEY: ART AND SOURCE

MAY 4 - JUNE 30, 1991
OPENING RECEPTION - FRIDAY MAY 3, 5-7 PM
GALLERY TALK - SUNDAY MAY 11, 3 PM

Mark Tansey's meticulous pseudo-realist canvases are reminiscent of 19th century history painting, yet the scenes he portrays depict a bewildering world of impossible juxtapositions of time and place. The current exhibition **Mark Tansey: Art and Source** features four large-scale monochromatic paintings and more than 40 preparatory works and source materials by this innovative and important mid-career artist.

Appearing at first glance to be witty visual puns and one-liners - a band of desert nomads in a barren windswept landscape, for example - they are also complex meditations on the interplay of reality, illusion, and representation. "In a decade of mature work, Tansey has established an original vision that combines detailed narrative and precise realism in a . . . vigorous blend of philosophy, literature and history," states Patterson Sims, the curator of the exhibition and director for art and exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum.

The four oil paintings featured in the exhibition capture the artist's engaging combination of wit and insight. Tying these works together is Tansey's conviction that our conception of "reality" is determined by the tools we use to represent and communicate experience - words, photographs, painted images, and so on - and that these descriptions are invariably incomplete, contradictory, deceptive, or otherwise inadequate. *A Short History of Modernist Painting (1979-1980)* presents a rich patchwork of black-and-white and sepia images that parade across the canvas like freeze frames from a 1950s newsreel and humorously undermine the most cherished notions of 20th century art. *White on White* (1986) describes the bizarre convergence of two bands of desert Bedouins and polar Eskimos in an ambiguous sand/snow-swept landscape. *Mont Sainte Victoire* (1987) reflects Tansey's fascination with Paul Cezanne, the father of modern art, and plays on two of that artist's best-known themes: his bathers and the mountain in the painting's title. *The Bricoleur's Daughter* (1987) shows a young girl secretly exploring a mysterious wonderland of bric-a-brac and tools on her father's worktable.

Providing insight into the artist's working and thought processes, the preparatory works and source materials in the exhibition range from photographs, news clippings,

and photocopies to collages and detailed graphite drawings. "Although the completed works are often rapidly executed," explains Sims, "the generation of the imagery is an extended and elaborate process linking art historical quotation, bibliographic reference, and covert portraits."

Mark Tansey: Art and Source is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue with an essay by Patterson Sims who will give a gallery talk on the artist's work on Sunday, May 11 at 3pm in the Reference Gallery of the List Visual Arts Center. The exhibition has been organized by the Seattle Art Museum. Funding for the exhibition and catalogue has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Collector's Forum and the Helen Gurvich Fund of the Seattle Art Museum.

The MIT List Visual Arts Center is located near the Kendall Square Red Line T Station. Parking is available at the corners of Main and Ames Street. All List Visual Arts Center exhibitions and lectures are free and open to the public.

Hours: Weekdays 12-6, Weekends 1-5, Gallery telephone 253-4680

For further information and photographs contact Ron Platt (617) 253-4400.