

## DIANE ROSENSTEIN GALLERY

### ROLAND REISS: UNREPENTANT FLOWERS AND NEW MINIATURE TABLEAUX

April 28 – June 2, 2018

Opening reception: Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Diane Rosenstein Gallery is pleased to present *Unrepentant Flowers and New Miniature Tableaux*, a solo exhibition of sculpture and paintings by Roland Reiss. In this exhibition, Reiss presents two different series of floral paintings, *Unrepentant Flowers* and *American Still Lifes*; and a series of six new wall-mounted Miniatures that expand his *Morality Play* series (begun in 1980). This is Roland Reiss' fourth exhibition with the gallery and presents his first new sculpture in nearly thirty years.

Roland Reiss' miniature tableaux of the late Seventies and Eighties are widely recognized for utilizing the postmodern tools of structuralism, cinematic framing, and semiotics to construct narratives, mysteries, and symbolic puzzles. He considers these works to be three-dimensional paintings, and *The Morality Plays* further consider how personal values are expressed by the manner in which we live our lives and the objects that we surround ourselves with. Each *mis-en-scène* is shown as a wall-mounted vitrine that depicts a living room, "marbleized" as a monument to American family life. The interiors of each stress a particular family goal, hobby, or aspect of domestic life – meals (*Repasterium*), money (*Monetarium*), literature (*Literarium*), space (*Asteroidium*), for example. They are reflections of the American Dream myth as it began to fracture in 1980. The over-abundance of nonessentials in each living room is contrasted with the absence of people, the absurd placement of objects, and the overriding signifiers in each tableau (money, safes and weapons) that convey an undertone to the seemingly innocuous household settings. Additionally, there are rectangular columns inscribed with virtues and vices in each space, reminders of the realities that we individually construct.

An innovative element in these new *Morality Plays* is the inclusion of the artist's most recent paintings (albeit at reduced scale) often above the fireplace in these rooms. These floral paintings are both the outlier and the thread that weave the work together. Both familiar and brand new, they collapse a history of painting and all of the artist's decades-long understanding of the medium. Reiss has said he wanted "to bring everything he knew about painting into his work" and that flowers provided the compositional scaffold for doing so. Flower painting began for Reiss partly as a reaction to the canon of subject hierarchy in art and they became the vehicle for expressing his accumulated experience in painting over the years and a framework to develop new insights. The *Unrepentant Flowers* series includes four different compositions that are repeated and sometimes reversed. Each depicts a brilliantly colored bouquet of flowers in a vase against a field of a single bold color. It is the artist's stated intention that he is trying to bring a new dimension to color.

## DIANE ROSENSTEIN GALLERY

This exhibition will also show paintings from the *American Still Life* series which similarly uses a vase of flowers as subject matter and compositional framework for each painting. However, in comparison to the *Unrepentant Flowers*, these present a colorless silhouette on a white ground. Here, Reiss employs a thick application of paint with clearly defined brush strokes in an effort to produce a visible sense of energy in relation to the theme of the work. Reiss has stated that, "The deepest part of painting is entering the consciousness of the painter through the material." The defined gestures, colors and demarcations of the painter's hand and intentions are a way to enter that consciousness.

Roland Reiss lives and works in Los Angeles.

This exhibition will run contemporaneously with *Roland Reiss: Unapologetic Flowers and Small Stories* at the Claremont Museum of Art from April 6 – July 8, 2018.

**ROLAND REISS** (USA, b. 1929) is widely recognized for his Miniatures, but he is first and foremost a painter. He was included in exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the 1975 *Whitney Biennial* and *documenta 7* (1982). LACMA included Mr. Reiss in *Avant Garde in the '80s* (1987). He has received survey exhibitions from the Begovich Gallery at Cal State Fullerton (2014), Pasadena Museum of Contemporary Art (2011-2012) and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (1991). Reiss has continuously received solo and group exhibitions throughout his career, at institutions including the Neuberger Museum of Art at SUNY (Purchase, NY), Orange County Museum of Art (Newport Beach, CA), Armory Center for the Arts (Pasadena, CA), San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA), The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, D.C.), and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Kansas City, MO). His paintings and sculpture are included in the permanent collection of the The Hammer, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) all in Los Angeles; and the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), among others. Roland Reiss was the Chairman of the Art Department at Claremont Graduate University from 1971- 2000; he has also received four National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist Fellowships for both painting and sculpture.