



MADISON SQUARE
PARK CONSERVANCY

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MAD. SQ. ART

ROXY PAINE

MAY 15 - DECEMBER 31, 2007



Roxy Paine *Conjoined*, 2007, stainless steel. Photo credit: Jason Mandella

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

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Mad. Sq. Art, the Madison Square Park Conservancy's free outdoor exhibition program, presents internationally renowned conceptual artist **Roxy Paine** exhibiting three stainless steel sculptures, **Conjoined**, **Defunct** and **Erratic**, in historic Madison Square Park (Fifth Avenue & 23rd Street). Roxy Paine's long interest in the juxtaposition of nature and industrialization has brought form to an extensive body of work. From his mushroom and plant fields to his art-making machines and large-scale metal trees, Roxy Paine continues to pursue the relationship of the natural to the unnatural. Through work that collides the organic with the manufactured, Paine questions our position between the man-made world we control and nature's world we cannot. Author Gregory Volk writes, "What happens is an interpretation of the real or, better yet, a hallucination of the real, in which a magical, logic defying quality emerges from what might otherwise seem known and familiar. A Utopian element lurks beneath, a desire to remake the world, to make it better, to make it new and improved."

The artist is engaged in an ongoing ambitious body of work: the creation of large stainless-steel tree sculptures, ranging in height from 12 to 55 feet. These complex works are fabricated from up to 7,000 metal pipe and rod elements, in 30 different diameters that are assembled through the rigorous task of cutting, bending, tacking, welding, grinding and polishing. This industrial process is central to the work. The trees have been placed in numerous important public collections across the United States and Europe, including the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, the St. Louis Art Museum, and the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Nebraska.

Conjoined is a 40-feet-tall by 45-feet-wide sculpture of two trees whose branches cantilever in space and connect in mid air. Paine creates two different tree species where each branch from one tree joins with a branch from the other. For the observer, it is unclear where one tree begins and the other ends. **Conjoined**, with its gleaming steel branches and improbable marriage of two species, embodies man's complex relationship with the empirical and utopian, as Ralph Waldo Emerson writes, "We want the Exact and the Vast; we want our Dreams, and our Mathematics."

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Defunct is a 47-foot-tall stainless steel sculpture of a dead or dying tree infiltrated with fungus. The trunk and limbs have deteriorated by disease or old age. The beauty of the once daunting, vibrant tree is shadowed by the growing rot and shelf fungus. The death of the tree has given life to the fungus. **Defunct**, a meditation on loss and life, describes the symbiosis between industry and earth, between production and natural selection.

Paine's newest exploration, **Erratic**, is a stainless steel boulder measuring 7 feet tall by 15 feet wide. In geology, the term "erratic" refers to a rock that has been carried by a glacier hundreds of miles away from its original geographic location. **Erratic**'s slick exterior leaves its origin unexplained. It is a boulder displaced from somewhere between a mountain and a steel factory.

Roxy Paine was born in 1966 in New York and studied at both the College of Santa Fe in New Mexico and the Pratt Institute in New York. Since 1989, his work has been internationally exhibited and is included in major collections such as De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, The Netherlands; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Wanas Foundation, Knislinge, Sweden; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Roxy Paine lives and works in Brooklyn and Treadwell, NY.

Mad. Sq. Art

Mad. Sq. Art is the free gallery without walls presented by the Madison Square Park Conservancy in the historic 6.2-acre park located at 5th Avenue and 23rd Street.



Roxy Paine, installation of *Conjoined*, 2007. Photo: Sofia M. Paine

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Mad. Sq. Art is supported by Founding Partners: The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Agnes Gund & Daniel Shapiro, Jill & Peter Kraus and Anonymous.

Additional support is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Leucadia Foundation and the Toby Lewis Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Cleveland. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Additional support provided by Pierpaolo Barzan, Barbara Berger, Susi & Joe Berland, Jill & Jay Bernstein, James Cohan Gallery, Paul Frankel, Lisa & Stuart Ginsberg, Marianne & Sheldon Lubar, Sherry & Joel Mallin, Lester Marks, G. Allen Mebane, Isabel Moore, the Donald R. Mullen Family Foundation, Carol & Davis Noble, Paula K. & James Ohaus, Judith & Donald Rechler Foundation, the Speyer Family Foundation, David Teiger, Cricket & Marty Taplin, Alice & Thomas J. Tisch Foundation, Anabeth & John Weil, Mr. & Mrs. David K. Welles and Virginia & Bagley Wright.

Madison Square Park Conservancy

The Madison Square Park Conservancy, a public/private partnership with New York City Parks & Recreation, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping historic Madison Square Park bright, beautiful and active. For more information, go to www.madisonsquarepark.org

For further information please contact Stewart Desmond, Madison Square Park Conservancy, 212-538-4689 or sdesmond@madisonsquarepark.org or Jane Cohan at James Cohan Gallery, 212-714-9500 jane@jamescohan.com

To find articles on Roxy Paine and his work, as well as his biography and bibliography, please visit the artist page at James Cohan Gallery website at www.jamescohan.com.

To view an interview with the artist please visit www.madisonsquarepark.orgT

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