

GLADSTONE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Andro Wekua "Blue Mirror"

March 1 through 29, 2008

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Andro Wekua. Viewing the past as a spiral of infinite reoccurrence, he creates enigmatic tableaux questioning the intersections of history, memory, and fantasy. In the new sculpture, paintings, collages, and film included in this exhibition, Wekua explores history as a chain of repeating events and emotions, that both heightens a sense of disassociation even as it sustains one's inner-life.

Many elements of Wekua's formal language reappear throughout the various media he employs. Images that could be family snapshots or advertisements haunt the base layers of his collages as the artist's hand drowns them in color, traces attenuated facial features, and obliterates the composition with interlocking geometric shapes. The question lingers whether what is buried is lost, or purposefully hidden. Out of these collages emerge not just recurring images but also the basic formal grammar of Wekua's visual world. The young boys and girls ripped from the photo albums or magazines, scarred or decorated in the collages, become the sculptures isolated in colored vitrines, or hiding on tabletops.

While sometimes a very literal boundary separates these children from the outside world, in many cases these figures are secluded by unknown forces, whether self-imposed or the product of past experience. This estrangement creates an uncanny sensation as twinned figures seemingly stand-in for the possibilities of autobiography or for the ramifications of earlier events. Through these doppelgangers, he explores an infinite division of self as the prerequisite for the desires that structure self-image. Wekua betrays the exuberant colors and fantastic vignettes as tinselled disguises for melancholy nostalgia. While his engagement with the past elicits a sense of lonely isolation, there seems to be a palpable desire for a shared understanding of one's inner life that unites the various enigmatic *mis-en-scene* through doubling. In his new film, Wekua tracks these reoccurrences, drawing a connection between the stasis of immobility and existential repetition.

Andro Wekua was born in 1977 in Georgia, and studied visual arts there and in Basel, Switzerland. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at numerous museums, including Neue Kunst Halle, St. Gallen, Switzerland; The Rubell Family Collection, Miami; Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and Hydra Workshops, Greece; and he has participated in various group shows including the 4th Berlin Biennial in 2006. He will have upcoming exhibitions at the Camden Arts Center, London; the De Haalen Haarlem; and Le Magasin, Grenoble. A fully illustrated artist's book will accompany this exhibition.

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