



October 2005

**Brooklyn Museum to Present First William Wegman Retrospective in Fifteen Years
On View March 10 Through May 28, 2006**

The Brooklyn Museum will be the first venue of *William Wegman: Funney/Strange*, an exhibition exploring forty years of Wegman's work in all media. The first retrospective of this artist's work in more than fifteen years, the exhibition will be on view from March 10 through May 28. Included will be more than 200 works, among them the signature 20 x 24 Polaroids, as well as early black-and-white and altered photographs, as well as paintings, drawings, collages, artists books, videos, and film.

The exhibition has been organized by the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and curated by the independent curator Trevor Fairbrother. After its premiere at Brooklyn, *Funney/Strange* will travel to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; the Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach; and the Addison Gallery. An extensive catalogue, written by scholar and critic Joan Simon and published by Yale University Press in association with the Addison Gallery of American Art, will accompany the exhibition.

Underlying all of William Wegman's work is a light humor that mediates a darker strangeness. His career, as the exhibition and the catalogue attest, has never been static or predictable, yet it is woven of enduring threads of interests and explorations that engaged him at the beginning and compel him still. Coming of age in the 1960s, Wegman was an early exponent of conceptual art and a pioneering maker of video. He continues to be a video artist and conceptual thinker at the same time that he is an adventurous painter, prolific writer, and masterful photographer who is able to navigate between art that amuses and surprises and art that challenges and transforms.

Born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, in 1943, Wegman received a B.F.A from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston and an M.F.A from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In Illinois and later in Wisconsin, he began to experiment with a wide range of media—film, kinetic sculpture, installation, and performance. While teaching at California State College in Long Beach in the 1970s, Wegman developed what was to be his mature artistic voice expressed in his signature media of photography, video, and text. It was in California that he acquired his canine muse Man Ray and began to include the dog in both photographs and video. By the fall of 1972 he moved to New York where he has remained ever since, applying his quirky and unpredictable imagination and expansive artistic appetite to a career that has been far-ranging, all-embracing, and provocative.

Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052
T (718) 638-5000 F (718) 501-6134
www.brooklynmuseum.org

Beloved by the general public and held in critical esteem within the international art world, Wegman fascinates both audiences for much the same reason: a smart, gently subversive humor that destabilizes the familiar to reveal life's essential oddity. Throughout his career, he has moved seamlessly among various media, from conceptual works to commissioned magazine shots, from video work to television segments made for *Sesame Street* and *Saturday Night Live*; from artist's books to children's books, from photographic "landscapes" employing his dogs to his most recent series of paintings that incorporate scenic postcards with drawing, collage, and paint. This exhibition will bring together classic Wegman images with rarely exhibited material and surprising new work to reveal the full range and savvy voice of this remarkable artist's production.

Trevor Fairbrother is an independent curator and scholar who has worked on a wide range of topics, from Andy Warhol to John Singer Sargent. He has served as a curator of American painting and of contemporary art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and as Deputy Director for Art at the Seattle Art Museum. Joan Simon is curator-at-large for the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has written extensively on contemporary art, including Ann Hamilton and Susan Rothenberg. Marilyn Kushner, Chair of the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Brooklyn Museum, is the coordinating curator for the Brooklyn presentation.

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Contact:

Sally Williams, Public Information Officer (718) 501-6330,
sally.williams@brooklynmuseum.org

Adam Husted, Media Relations Manager (718) 501-6331,
adam.husted@brooklynmuseum.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$8; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$4. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.