

**WHAT IS PAINTING? CONTEMPORARY ART FROM THE COLLECTION PRESENTS
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON PAINTING SINCE THE SIXTIES**

***What Is Painting? Contemporary Art from the Collection*
The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor
July 7-September 17, 2007**

NEW YORK, July 6, 2007—*What Is Painting? Contemporary Art from the Collection* is an exhibition of 50 works of art, each of which offers a different response to the question “What is painting?”, ranging in expression from ironic to sincere, from figurative to abstract, and from an embrace of painterly gesture to cooler serial styles. Avoiding a strictly linear or thematic approach, *What Is Painting?* proposes a multifaceted view of painting, understood both as material practice and as a conceptual category or idea. The exhibition’s title derives from John Baldessari’s eponymous painting of 1966-68, with the addition of a question mark, acknowledging the ongoing debates over the practice of painting and its place within contemporary art. It is the fourth in a series of installations drawn from the Museum’s collection of contemporary art since the Museum’s reopening in 2004.

What Is Painting? Contemporary Art from the Collection is organized by Anne Umland, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art.

“The exhibition is deliberately kaleidoscopic, and is dedicated to the principle of questioning, and to a model of history that accommodates the pursuit of alliances, moments of disagreement, cross-generational connections, and contradictions,” said Ms. Umland. “It celebrates the richness and depth of the Museum’s collection and the many different histories of modern and contemporary art it contains.”

Organized in a loosely chronological sequence, works dating from the mid 1960s to the present are displayed in a series of 12 open-ended galleries designed to encourage the discovery of visual connections, unexpected juxtapositions, shifting relationships, and accessible contrasts from many different vantage points. Each wall in the exhibition features a single work of art, emphasizing every artist’s individual voice, while the open architectural plan allows viewers to see relationships between works.

Within each of the 12 galleries, works are grouped according to stylistic, historical, or thematic affinities, touching upon issues that took on particular urgency in the 1960s and continue to figure within painting today. These include the fertile relationship between painting and photography, the impact of text-based conceptual art and systemic practices, and the persistent coexistence and intermingling of abstract and representational modes.

The majority of the works in the exhibition are on view for the first time in the new building, which opened in 2004. Among them are notable recent acquisitions by Vija Celmins, John Currin, Marlene Dumas, Wade Guyton, Sherrie Levine, Lee Lozano, Gabriel Orozco,

Wilhelm Sasnal, and Luc Tuymans. Other works from the collection that have not been displayed since the reopening include those by Robert Colescott, Anselm Kiefer, Martin Kippenberger, Glenn Ligon, Beatriz Milhazes, Gerhard Richter, Robert Ryman, and Atsuko Tanaka, among others.

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www.moma.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday
The Museum will be open until 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays from July 19 through August 30, 2007.

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D.
(For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

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