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SFMOMA PRESENTS THE ART OF RICHARD TUTTLE
Major Retrospective Offers Unprecedented Overview

As a highlight of its 2005 exhibition schedule, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *The Art of Richard Tuttle* from July 2 through October 16, 2005. The first full-scale retrospective of this influential American contemporary artist's oeuvre, the exhibition brings together more than three hundred significant works from collections worldwide and unifies Tuttle's four-decade career in the most comprehensive presentation of his work ever mounted. Organized by Madeleine Grynsztejn, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA, in close collaboration with the artist, *The Art of Richard Tuttle* will embark upon an extensive national tour following its San Francisco debut.



New Mexico, New York, #14, 1998; 22 3/4 x 10 1/2 x 1/2 in.; Collection of Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz, New York; © Richard Tuttle; photo: Tom Powel

The exhibition will showcase a definitive selection of Tuttle's richly complex and highly diverse output from the mid-1960s to the present including sculptures, paintings, assemblages, works on paper, and artist books. The artist's distinctive style and its relation to American art since 1965 will be emphasized, summarizing the trajectory of his work and celebrating his singular achievements.

After opening at SFMOMA, *The Art of Richard Tuttle* will travel to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (November 10, 2005 to February 5, 2006); the Des Moines Art Center (March 18 to June 11, 2006); the Dallas Museum of Art (July 15 to October 8, 2006); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (November 11, 2006 to February 4, 2007); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (March 18 to June 25, 2007).

Works in the exhibition are drawn from renowned private collections and museums including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, and feature a concentration of important Tuttle pieces from SFMOMA's collection.

A Maverick from the Start

Born in Rahway, New Jersey, in 1941, Richard Tuttle now makes his home in both New York City and Abiquiu, New Mexico. Beginning in the mid-1960s, Tuttle's work formed an essential part of the groundbreaking

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developments that reconceived Minimalism by adopting a direct and improvisational process of making art using nontraditional materials. Tuttle is among the most influential of the first-generation Post-Minimalists—a group that includes Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman, and Richard Serra. Tuttle’s art purposefully blurs the boundaries between painting, sculpture, and drawing, and between the artwork and its surrounding space; his use of diverse and unorthodox materials challenges formal restrictions. A concept of independence and sense of joy lie at the heart of each of Tuttle’s works. Taking an unprecedented approach to interpreting his oeuvre, this exhibition reveals the fundamentally democratic attitude informing his art: the openness of his compositions is a tribute to individual curiosity, experimentation, and freedom that has greatly influenced later generations of artists.

Tuttle had his first solo exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery in New York in 1965, and was introduced to the greater public in a 1975 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Thirty years have elapsed since that presentation, and his evolving artistic contributions demand a rigorous reinvestigation. His art continues to question concepts of composition and frame, toy with the balance between line and volume, and merge the mystical with the material. While Tuttle’s work has stirred controversy over the years, recently he has won the admiration of a younger generation of artists who have found inspiration in his formal audacity and uncompromising integrity of vision.

“Tuttle’s brilliance lies in his ambition to create a singular object that is as exuberant, as natural, and as real as a living form,” states Grynstejn. “The ephemeral quality conveyed through much of his work and its authentic emotional charge are characteristics shared with, and normally reserved for, animate things. Much of the liberal formal experimentation that we see in art production today could not have happened without his trailblazing example.”



Canvas Dark Blue, 1967; dyed canvas; 70 x 35 1/2 in., orientation variable; Stenn Family Collection, Chicago; © Richard Tuttle

An Exhibition of Unequaled Scope

The presentation in *The Art of Richard Tuttle* will be essentially chronological, alternating concentrations of works from a single series with displays combining two or three related bodies of work. The design of the exhibition will allow viewers to understand Tuttle’s methodology, as each gallery builds on the one preceding to emphasize the unifying principles in Tuttle’s work: his distinct use of line, his explorations of scale, the pendulum swing between structural complexity and simplicity, and the artist’s precise attention to the work’s relationship to the wall. *The Art of Richard Tuttle* will be the first to convey these unifying threads, as previous exhibitions have focused on discrete bodies of work and have not cited correspondences within Tuttle’s overall production.

Beginning with Tuttle’s eccentrically shaped painted-wood reliefs of the mid-1960s, the exhibition will move through his unstretched, shaped-and-dyed canvases to his glyphlike tin constructions. It continues with a selection of his wire pieces (nearly invisible wires installed in lyrical loops on a wall marked with pencil lines and cast shadows), multimedia assemblages made in the 1980s (*Monkey’s Recovery*), and the series of free-standing sculptures called *Floor Drawings*. The exhibition next explores Tuttle’s return to

intimate-sized work (*Line Pieces*) and wall-size installations (*Inside the Still Pure Form*) from the early 1990s, followed by his low-relief wall-bound pieces (*New Mexico/New York, Whiteness, Two with Any To, Waferboard*) and the recent *Twenty Pearls* series. A large selection of Tuttle's drawings and artist books also will be included in the exhibition. His work in design will be alluded to with the inclusion of artist-designed exhibition furniture.

An Art-Historical Contribution

The Art of Richard Tuttle is the third in a series of monographic presentations organized by SFMOMA since 2000 focusing on minimalist and post-minimalist art; others in the series are *Sol LeWitt: A Retrospective* (2000) and *Eva Hesse* (2002). Coupled with the Museum's significant collection growth over the last decade in post-1960 contemporary art, this expansive project allows SFMOMA to continue its substantial contribution to scholarship in post-minimalist art, further reinforcing the Museum's position as a center for research in this field.

SFMOMA, in association with Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., will publish a 388-page, fully illustrated exhibition catalogue with essays offering new scholarly findings by Cornelia H. Butler, Madeleine Grynsztejn, Richard Shiff, Katy Siegel, and Robert Storr, with additional entries by Tara McDowell, Elizabeth Smith, Adam Weinberg, and Charles E. Wylie. The book promises to be the definitive publication on the artist and a lasting contribution to the art-historical field.

In conjunction with *The Art of Richard Tuttle*, SFMOMA's Education Department will present related events and interpretive programs including lectures, symposia, daily docent tours, and an opening-week public discussion between the artist and curator Grynsztejn. In addition, a new segment of SFMOMA's award-winning *Making Sense of Modern Art* multimedia program exploring Tuttle's unique approach to art and materials will be available at in-gallery computer kiosks and online at www.sfmoma.org. The artist also will participate in a book signing at the SFMOMA MuseumStore.

The Art of Richard Tuttle is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and is generously supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, Mimi and Peter Haas, the Edward E. Hills Fund, Helen and Charles Schwab, and Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro. Additional support has been provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Shirley Ross Sullivan and Charles Sullivan, +the Irving Stenn Family, the Kadima Foundation, the Frances R. Dittmer Family Foundation, Jeanne and Michael Klein, Tim Nye and the MAT Charitable Foundation, Craig Robins, Louisa Stude Sarofim, Sperone Westwater, Joseph Holtzman, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, and Carolyn and Preston Butcher.

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Museum hours: open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. Koret Visitor Education Center: open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children twelve and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings, 6 to 8:45 p.m., admission is half price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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