

JOHN BERGGRUEN GALLERY

228 GRANT AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94108 TEL 415-781-4629

FAX 415-781-0126 GALLERY@BERGGRUEN.COM WWW.BERGGRUEN.COM

WILLIAM T. WILEY

Fear Rules

November 3 – December 6, 2008

John Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by William T. Wiley. *William T. Wiley: Fear Rules* will be on display between November 3 and December 6, 2008. John Berggruen Gallery will host an opening reception for the artist, which will include a special musical performance by Wiley, in conjunction with First Thursdays on Thursday, November 6, 5:30 – 7:30pm.

As suggested in the exhibition title, *Fear Rules*, the latest iteration of Wiley's highly distinctive style manifests itself in a series of 15 new paintings that offer wry and irreverent commentary on the socio-political climate of the contemporary American landscape. Fear has been a recurring theme in Wiley's work, and is particularly poignant, as David Littlejohn writes, "At a time when such blatant fear-mongering seemed to be the administration's order of the day."¹ Wiley plays with this notion of fear, commenting on it, among other acute issues, through a variety of mechanisms that have become synonymous with his name: Wiley's works are rich with texts that suggest narrative complexity interspersed with humorous asides, and he frequently incorporates a figurative style that refers directly to famous artists of the past while containing personal references to everything from Zen Buddhism, Jungian imagery, comics, current events, environmentalist discourse and more. The resulting paintings are often both serious and comical, beautiful and grotesque, and always filled with multiple layers of meaning.

William T Wiley was born in Bedford, Indiana in 1937. He studied at the San Francisco Art Institute where he completed a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in 1960 and a Master's of Fine Arts in 1962. Since completing his studies in San Francisco, he has taught at the University of California, Davis and appeared regularly in individual and group shows on a national and international level, including major exhibitions at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2005), M.H. deYoung Museum, San Francisco (1996), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1981), the Whitney Biennial (1983) and Venice Biennale (1980). In 2009, the Smithsonian American Art Museum will organize a traveling retrospective of Wiley's work titled *What's it all mean: William T. Wiley in Retrospect*, which will be on display from October 2 – January 24, 2010 before moving to the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, March 17 – June 20, 2010. Wiley is represented in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others. He has been the recipient of various awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship Award in 2004. This is his second solo exhibition at John Berggruen Gallery.

For further information and photographs, please contact Tamar Nahmias at (415)781.4629 or tamar@berggruen.com.

Gallery hours: Monday - Friday: 9:30-5:30, Saturday: 10:30-5:00

¹ Littlejohn, David. 2007. "Wiley in the 21st Century" in *William T. Wiley: Selections from Two Exhibitions*. San Francisco: John Berggruen Gallery and New York: Charles Cowles Gallery.