

— For Immediate Release

Contact: Anne Wehr
(212) 980-4575
awehr@publicartfund.org

Public Art Fund presents...

Robert Therrien: Table and Six Chairs

At 590 Madison Avenue at 56th Street

September 28 – November 28, 2005

Opening reception September 28, 2005 5-7pm

New York, NY – Public Art Fund is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, “Robert Therrien: Table and Six Chairs,” presenting a single, monumental sculpture by Los Angeles-based artist Robert Therrien. No Title, 2003 (Table and Six Chairs) is a colossal table-and-chair set that stands almost ten-feet-high, so tall that viewers can easily walk beneath it. Installed in the atrium of 590 Madison Avenue, amidst the bamboo trees and actual-size public seating, this larger-than-life sculpture will transform its immediate surroundings, offering viewers a new way of seeing familiar forms.

For more than three decades, Los Angeles-based artist Robert Therrien has performed an unusual type of alchemy on everyday objects. He creates sculptures that are easily recognizable as altered versions of simple, often utilitarian things. No Title, 2003 (Table and Six Chairs) is made after the actual wooden table-and-chair set that Therrien has at home in his own kitchen. Although it is made of painted metal, the sculpture looks like it is wood.

Therrien is drawn to particular objects because they are readily accessible, but, more importantly, because he knows his viewers will be as familiar with their form and function as he is. This allows him to tap into the broad cultural resonance and narrative ambiguity of everyday forms. The experience of walking underneath the table and chairs, for example, can be at once intimate and uncanny, prompting childhood nostalgia or just physical disorientation. It offers a new, or at least forgotten, perspective on a familiar household fixture, transforming both the viewer’s perception of the object itself and the space that contains it.

The artist’s interest in the quotidian object, combined with an interest in its formal properties, has led him to recycle certain visual motifs throughout his career. This 2003 version of the sculpture has its roots in two earlier works. The first, No Title, 1993 (yellow table leg)—now in the collection of The Museum of

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Modern Art—is a large table corner and leg jutting out from the wall. Soon after, he created *Under the Table* (1993). “Under the Table”—one of the few titles that he has given to a work other than his routinely spare “no title”—describes not only the viewer’s diminutive relationship to the piece, but also the original inspiration for the sculptural series. Intrigued by the view beneath his kitchen table, Therrien shot a series of black-and-white Polaroid photos, capturing the mix of vertical and horizontal lines formed by the wooden furniture’s surfaces, legs, and rungs. With the sculpture, Therrien resizes the original object to create for the viewer the same dramatic perspective as seen in the photograph.

This exhibition marks the first presentation of *No Title, 2003 (Table and Chairs)*. For Therrien, it also marks a new way of exhibiting the works in the series. The table and chairs have always been shown in gallery spaces that, although necessarily large, still required the viewer to walk under the work to see it. In the expansive atrium of 590 Madison, the viewer can get an all-over look at the table and chairs from far away. This shift is subtle yet important to Therrien, for whom the act of art-making is fundamentally about looking at something from a different perspective, and enticing viewers to do the same.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Therrien is known primarily as a sculptor, although he has also worked in painting, drawing, printmaking and photography. In the 1980s, he became known for creating sculptures and works on paper that walked the line between representation and abstraction. Since the early 1990s his work has become increasingly representational, in part because of the influence of photography. He was born in Chicago in 1947; he now lives and works in Los Angeles. Highlights of his many solo exhibitions include self-titled exhibitions at the Gagosian Gallery, New York (2001); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2000); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1991); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1984).

Special thanks to Edward J. Minskoff Equities.

LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS

590 Madison Avenue is located between 56th and 57th Streets. The atrium is open to the public from 8am – 10pm daily.

PUBLIC ART FUND is New York’s leading organizer of artists’ projects, new commissions, installations and exhibitions in public spaces. Public Art Fund is a non-profit arts organization supported by generous contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations, and with public funds from The New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency, and the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs.

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