



Press release 7 October 2020

Rodney Graham's exhibition *Artists and Models* to open at Serlachius Museums in Finland

Canadian Rodney Graham is one of his country's most respected contemporary artists and he has exhibited in countless exhibitions throughout the world. His exhibition *Artists and Models* opens at the Serlachius Museums on 24 October 2020. Graham's exhibition will be his first in Finland.

Rodney Graham (b. 1949), who lives and works in Vancouver, is an exceptionally versatile artist. In addition to large photographic works, his production includes paintings and sculptures as well as films, videos and literary works. He is also a musician and the leader of a band that bears his name.

He is best known for his disguise self-portraits, monumental photographic works in which he assumes various fictional roles. His art is characterised by subtle nostalgia, gentle humour and poetic irony. Using a computer, he builds exceptionally large photographic works from hundreds of separate images. There are many details, and every one is significant.

In his works, Graham examines the layers of Western culture: both everyday life and collective memory. He draws on wide-ranging references to philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the art and popular culture of different eras.

Artists and Models, as its name implies, looks at different ways of being an artist and a model. Many of the characters appearing in the works of the exhibition are professionals or enthusiasts in the creative industries and at the same time also Graham's models. An additional dimension is provided by the fact that characters placed in different locations and eras are created and performed by the artist himself.

Vacuuming the Gallery encapsulates the theme of the exhibition

The conceptual layers of Rodney Graham's art are well reflected in the exhibition's main work, *Vacuuming the Gallery 1949* (2018). The work is a view into an elegant 1940s New York art gallery. The artist himself plays the gallerist in a fictional gallery, the paintings of which are based on variations he has made of a sketch by the Russian artist Alexandr Rodchenko. Similar abstract works painted by Graham are also to be found in the museum's exhibition space.

The multidimensionality fascinates the curator of the exhibition, Timo Valjakka, according to whom Graham asks tough questions about making and presenting art: are the paintings and sculptures in the exhibition made by himself or by the fictional artists appearing in his photographs? Are they independent works of art or are they sets?

“From Graham’s point of view, the situation is delicious. It allows him to roam freely in the landscape of 20th-century Modernism, raise a hat to its numerous isms and also play with their characteristics. In the works, one can identify references to Synthetic Cubism, everyday crafts and Abstract Expressionism, each time ingeniously interpreted,” says Valjakka.

The exhibition is accompanied by an eponymous catalogue, which presents the works of the exhibition and tells about Graham’s art. The texts of the publication are in English and Finnish. The book is published by PARVS Publishing Company.

Artists and Models is open at Serlachius Museum Gösta 24 October 2020–18 April 2021.

For further information, please contact:

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<https://serlachius.fi/en/for-media/>

Image above:

Rodney Graham, *Vacuuming the Gallery 1949*, 2018, painted aluminium lightbox with transmounted chromogenic transparency. Courtesy Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar. Image: Rodney Graham Studio.

The Serlachius Museums are open:

in the winter season, 1 September–31 May, from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am–6 pm.

in the summer season, 1 June–31 August, every day 10 am–6 pm

Visiting addresses:

Serlachius Museum Gösta: Joenniemi 47, 35800 Mänttä, Finland

Serlachius Museum Gustaf: R. Erik Serlachiuksen katu 2, 35800 Mänttä, Finland

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