

TEMPLON

II

Press release
11 July 2017

GEORGE SEGAL

September 9 – October 28, 2017
Opening Saturday, September 9 from 12 am to 8 pm



The Dancers, 1971

Galerie Templon is marking the new season with an exhibition that offers visitors the chance to rediscover the works of George Segal (1924-2000), probably the most existentialist of Pop artists. Famous for his environments populated by disturbing plaster figures, George Segal is ranked as one of the best American sculptors. This retrospective exhibition is the first in France in 20 years.

George Segal's tableaux are reflections on the individual and on consumer society. He plays on the permeability of spaces, inviting the viewer to converse with his anonymous and motionless figures. Segal flips the hierarchies: the objects are as real and permanent as nature itself, whereas the human figures are made by hand out of one of the most fragile materials: plaster.

In the 1960s, George Segal developed a layered plaster bandage moulding technique by applying the bandages directly to the model's body. He used this technique to reveal the evocative power of gesture and its poetic, social, erotic and political dimensions. The bandage, an instrument of healing, thus becomes a metaphor for the fragility of life, underlining a need for transcendence below the body's empty shell.

The exhibition features a comprehensive selection of the American artist's works. Originally a realist (*The Dancers*, *The Couple*), George Segal's works began to evolve in the 1970s, turning towards a more expansive and freer style of expression. The coloured works of the 1980s, both figurative paintings and still lifes (*Nude on Red Chair*, *Girl on Wicker Lounge*), enter into a dialogue with the history of art and master painters like Cézanne and Degas. By isolating and highlighting fragments of body parts, the opulent bas-reliefs and series of erotic paintings (*Hand Fragments*) refer in particular to the women washing and dressing motif. In the 1990s, the artist shifted his focus to expressionist naturalism. The dual plastering/moulding technique offers greater detail on the surface (*42nd Street Deli*, *Bus Passengers*), while the fusion of sculpture and painting brings to life a plethora of artistic expressions via colour, light and emotions. The darker works (*Woman Standing in Doorway*, *Woman Lying on a Bed*) operate as a negative presence – like the inside of a mould or incarnation of a shadow.

Born in 1924 in New York, George Segal lived and worked in New Jersey, USA, until his death in 2000. Since 1962, when the artist was discovered at a group Pop art collective exhibition, George Segal's sculptures have achieved international recognition for their ability to transform everyday realities into a theatre of mysterious and poetic apparitions. Among his numerous solo exhibitions were major retrospectives in 1978 at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis ; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA ; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA, in 1997 at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal (Canada), in 1998 at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C; in 2002 at Utsunomiya Museum of Art, Utsunomia, Japan and at the Hermitage State Museum in St Petersburg(Russia).Galerie Templon presented George Segal's works for the first time in 1979 in Paris, as part of the group exhibition La peinture américaine.