

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

"Jack Smith "Thanks for Explaining Me" at Gladstone Gallery, NY", Mousse Magazine, May, 20, 2011.

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Following his arrival in New York in 1953, Jack Smith became one of the most influential members of the American avant-garde and a central figure in the cultural history of the film, performance, and art of downtown New York. The exhibition “Thanks For Explaining Me” at Gladstone Gallery – curated by Neville Wakefield – presents 12 recently restored films as well as a selection of drawings, collages, never before seen color photographs, black-and-white photographs, and two seminal slide shows. Three collaborative works are also on view, in which artists Ryan McNamara, A.L. Steiner, and T. J. Wilcox appropriate heretofore unseen Jack Smith film material to create contemporary meditations on Smith’s fascinating life and work.

Wakefield has conceived of his curatorial endeavor as a tributary approach to Smith’s creative practice and panoptic production, writing:

“More than almost any artist of the last century Jack Smith understood that within the prevailing cultures of success, art’s greatest role may have been to provide provision for public failure. To this end his actors and accomplices, props and lighting, drugs and desires were invariably wrong: wrong before the performance had started – before even the lights had gone down. The marathon of tourettic revisions, false starts and delays signaled to the world the impossibility of creating anything of value in a rectilinear lagoon where even the dedicated and willing were dragged to the bottom-feeding level of landlords and lobsters. Yet out of these impossible conditions was born the stuff of exquisite beauty, radical politics, lurid, caustic, pornographic and often hilarious evocations of the sexual and social strata in which we find ourselves. Much of this endures even in conditions Smith would have most likely have loathed. But the fact that the same frictions that heated and formed his work continue to frustrate curators as well as inflame and inspire artists – including those who have agreed to continue the spirit and legacy with works created for this show – is, I hope, testament to the enduring power and influence of Jack Smith’s extraordinary art.”

A special film program takes place on Saturdays, wherein newly restored Jack Smith prints are screened on 16mm celluloid. The films are introduced by film historians, scholars, friends and collaborators of Jack Smith. The Saturday series presents a rare opportunity to see these film prints in the context of the artist’s larger body of work.

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*Untitled*, c.1958-1962/2011. Copyright: Estate Jack Smith. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York

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*Untitled*, c.1958-1962/2011. Copyright: Estate Jack Smith. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York

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*Untitled, c.1958-1962/2011. Copyright: Estate Jack Smith. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York*

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Jack Smith "Thanks For Explaining Me", until June 16, 2011. Installation View, Gladstone Gallery, New York. Copyright: Estate Jack Smith. Courtesy: Gladstone Gallery, New York. Photo: David Regen

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