

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Ugo Rondinone

the sun

530 West 21st Street

September 22 – November 16, 2018

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of three distinct yet interrelated bodies of work by Ugo Rondinone in both Chelsea locations. Developed throughout his practice, these large-scale landscape drawings, window, and sun sculptures speak directly to Rondinone's continued exploration of German Romanticism and its key artistic figure, Caspar David Friedrich. Reanimating commonplace objects—such as tree branches or window frames—in his own Neo-Romantic signature, he creates a lyrical world of his own. This formal and generic diversity mines the fecund aesthetic and philosophical tensions central to his work: nature and humanity, exterior world and inner life, expansion and intimacy, organic and artificial. Rondinone stylizes these dichotomies into new physical and temporal sites of self-reflection and universal connection.

Rondinone's sepia drawings of wooded landscapes have been foundational to his oeuvre since 1989. Reminiscent of the drawings of Romantic landscape painters Rodolphe Bresdin and Samuel Palmer, the haptic idiosyncrasies of Rondinone's hatching gestures manifest in absorbing tableau of knotted trees, twisting branches, and overabundant foliage. In this way, they extend the tradition of the *wanderzeichner* or wandering draughtsman—a sylvan progenitor to the urban flâneur—into the present day. Exchanging plain air realism for imaginative fiction, these large-scale drawings come from an archive of the artist's own naturalist sketches of individual flora; they are then patchworked together into a world of Rondinone's creation. Seducing the viewer into darkness, these drawings recall nature's central role in the Romantic conception of the sublime. In his *Theories of Garden Art* (1775/77), noted German philosopher and landscape designer C.C.L. Hirschfeld presaged the soul expanding properties of such expansive and dramatic vistas: Rondinone's beguiling landscapes, too, inspire one to feel that one "no longer belongs to the everyday, but instead is a being of power and determination manifesting far beyond the point at which we stand."

Gladstone's 21st street location will feature a monumental sun sculpture, a single ring of gilded bronze, cast from encircling tree branches. Blunt ends of the individual tree trunks and the punctae of twigs bind the sun to the ground, even as it seems to hang in the air. Evoking the celestial body using antecedents of the earth, Rondinone's sun celebrates the lyrical paradoxes that contour ontological boundaries and how they eventually collapse via the aesthetic gesture's potential to transform. Both spaces include examples of his series of window sculptures—metal casts of nineteenth-century window casings each named for one of Friedrich's paintings, including *drifting clouds*, where this exhibition takes its name. Defying the expectation of revealing a "heavenly panorama" of the kind writer Kurt Waller noted he saw in the views from Friedrich's studio, the burnished opacity of these window panes marks a key distinction in Rondinone's practice. For him, the shift between complete absorption in the natural world's sublimity to the solitude of self-reflection hearkens to dramatic tensions that distinguish the Romantic mode, while also recalling nineteenth century critic Walter Pater's evocation of sensual experience as ultimately "the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."

Ugo Rondinone was born in 1964 in Brunnen, Switzerland and currently lives and works in New York. Rondinone has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at institutions including: Bass Museum of Art, Miami; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Place Vendôme, Paris; MACRO and Mercati di Traiano, Rome; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum Anahuacalli, Mexico City; Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai; Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens; Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna; and Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium. In 2016, Rondinone's large-scale public work seven magic mountains opened outside Las Vegas, co-produced by the Art Production Fund and Nevada Museum of Art. Last year, Rondinone curated a city-wide exhibition, "Ugo Rondinone: I ♥ John Giorno," which honored the artist's life partner in thirteen venues throughout Manhattan. His work is currently on view at the Arken Museum of Modern Art in Ishøj, Denmark through the end of the year.

Banks Violette
130 East 64th Street, New York
Through October 27, 2018

Sharon Lockhart
12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels
Through October 20, 2018

For further information, please contact Andrew Huff: (212) 206-9300 or ahuff@gladstonegallery.com
New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm and Saturday, 12pm – 6pm