

Rackstraw Downes

ADAA: The Art Show, Booth D18

February 28 - March 3, 2019; Preview Gala: February 27, 2019

There is one thing I think realism is definitely not, though it is often confused with it, and that is a technique. Technique is a skill you can learn so you don't have to respond to what you are looking at, you don't have to be inquisitive about it. If something is real to you, the question becomes, not How do I do that, but What is this phenomenon I'm perceiving?
~Rackstraw Downes

The work of **Rackstraw Downes** will be the focus of **Betty Cunningham Gallery's booth (D18)** at the 2019 edition of The Art Show, organized by the **Art Dealers Association of America**. The Art Show runs from February 28th through March 3 at the Park Avenue Armory, located at Park Avenue and 67th Street in New York City.



Demolition and Excavation on the Site of the Equitable Life Assurance Society's New Tower at 7th Avenue and 52nd Street, 1983.
Oil on Canvas, 32 x 36 in.

Whether deep in the desert of the Southwest or in the intimate space of his studio, Downes remains steadfastly committed to painting from observation. On view are 11 paintings including two interiors - one of the artist's own studio (2017) and another of The Arena in Donald Judd's Chinati Foundation (1999). Also included are two New York paintings: *Outdoor Passageway at 15 Rivington*, presents a close up view of a tiny alley on the Lower East Side, while a broad aerial view of the City is shown in *Demolition and Excavation on the Site of the Equitable Life Assurance Society's New Tower at 7th Avenue and 52nd Street*, 1983.

The Gallery will screen *Rackstraw Downes: a painter*, a film by Rima Yamazaki, which gives viewers a rare, close up glimpse of the artist at work. This film has been screened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA.

Downes, born in England in 1939, received a BA from Cambridge in 1961 and a BFA and MFA from Yale University in 1963 and 1964 respectively. He became a US citizen in 1980. He is the recipient of the Guggenheim (1998) and MacArthur (2009) Fellowships, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1999). A retrospective, *Rackstraw Downes: Onsite Paintings, 1972-2008*, was organized by the Parrish Art Museum in 2010. It traveled to the Portland Museum of Art, ME, and the Weatherspoon Museum in Greensboro, NC. Notably, he delivered the Ninth Annual Raymond Lecture for the Archives of American Art in 2009; in 2011, he participated in a Wyeth Foundation for American Art Conference at the National Gallery of Art, entitled *Landscape in American Art, 1940-2000* where he delivered the address "From There to Here"; in 2012 he was featured on PBS's critically acclaimed *Art 21* series, and in 2015, he delivered the inaugural Betty Jean & Wayne Thiebaud Endowed Lecture at the University of California, Davis.

His essays have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, and *Art Journal*. In 2014, Edgewise Press published *Nature and Art Are Physical: Writings on Art, 1967-2008* by Rackstraw Downes. A monograph, with essays by Robert Storr, Sanford Schwartz and Rackstraw Downes, was published by Princeton University Press in 2005. Other books include *Under the Gowanus and Razor-Wire Journal* (Turning the Head Press, 2000); *In Relation to the Whole: Three Essays from Three Decades - 1973, 1981, 1996* (Edgewise Press 2004) and Downes introduced and edited, *Fairfield Porter: Art in Its Own Terms* (Zoland Books, 1979, reprinted by the MFA, Boston, 2008).

Currently on view at the Gallery's Lower East Side space is an exhibition of the work of **Bill Traylor**, on view through March 3, 2019. For further information or photos, please contact the gallery at 212.242.2772.