

# WHITNEY

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## Press Release

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### **WHITNEY MUSEUM TO PRESENT *ALBERS AND MOHOLY-NAGY: FROM THE BAUHAUS TO THE NEW WORLD***

*On view November 2, 2006 through January 21, 2007*

Josef Albers and László Moholy-Nagy were two of the greatest pioneers of Modernism in the 20th century. This exhibition, spanning four decades and comprising more than 170 works, focuses on their individual accomplishments as well as the dialogue between their works and examines their groundbreaking moves towards abstraction in the early 1920s. *Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World*, organized by Tate Modern, will be on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art from November 2, 2006, to January 21, 2007.

Though the paths of German-born Josef Albers (1888-1976) and Hungarian-born László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) only overlapped for five years, between 1923 and 1928 when both were teaching at the Bauhaus, their artistic practice was informed by similar concerns, including an emphasis on experimentation, the subversion of traditional boundaries between media, high and applied art, and a probing into the status of the work of art in an age of mass production.

Offering a range of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, and furniture design, this show highlights Albers's eye-catching glass constructions from the 1920s and early 1930s, examples of his largely unknown photographic work, his machine engravings and a group of his early *Homage to the Square* paintings. It also features a wide selection of Moholy-Nagy's innovative photographs, including his "camera-less" photograms and photomontages, his rarely exhibited forays into color photography, his film works, and his experiments with aluminum as well as with novel synthetic materials such as Perspex and Rhodoid.

Moholy-Nagy's *Light Prop for an Electric Stage* (1930) was reconstructed especially for the exhibition. Dramatically lit, this kinetic work comprises several rotating elements that cast lights and shadows on the surrounding walls. It is being exhibited more than seventy-five years after the original was first displayed at the Grand Palais, in 1930, and is arguably one of the earliest examples of installation art. *Light Play: Black-White-Grey* (1930), a five-and-a-half-minute silent film will also be shown; it records the play of light on the *Light Prop*.

This exhibition takes as its starting point the years following the First World War, when Albers and Moholy-Nagy independently abandoned representation in favor of a rigorously abstract language. It then follows their work through the 1920s with a particular focus on their involvement with the Bauhaus, Weimar Germany's hothouse for Modernist art and design education. For both artists this time was marked by technical innovation, with Albers adopting industrial processes such as sandblasting to create an extraordinary series of flashed glass works, and Moholy-Nagy exploring new synthetic materials, such as Perspex, as well as experimenting with photography and film.

The second part of the exhibition is dedicated to the work Albers and Moholy-Nagy produced following their emigration to the US, when Albers took up teaching posts first at Black Mountain College and then at Yale University, and Moholy-Nagy set to revive the Bauhaus with the short-lived New Bauhaus in Chicago before founding his own school, The School of Design in Chicago (subsequently The Institute of Design). Their work from the 1930s and 1940s reveals how both men built on earlier experiences while ceaselessly pushing the boundaries of their artistic practice.

*Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World* was curated by Tate Curator Achim Borchardt-Hume. The New York installation is organized by Carter Foster, the Whitney's Curator of Drawings. It is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue which contains essays by Hal Foster, Achim Borchardt-Hume, Nicholas Fox Weber, Hattula Moholy-Nagy, Terence A Senter, and Michael White. Before coming to the Whitney, the exhibition traveled to the Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany.

### **About the Whitney**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, and Lucas Samaras, as well as significant works by

Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today.

***Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:***

Full House: Views of the Whitney's Collection at 75 *Edward Hopper on view Through December 3, 2006	June 29-September 3, 2006*
Mark Grotjahn	September 15, 2006-January 7, 2007
Picasso and American Art	September 28, 2006-January 28, 2007
Albers and Moholy-Nagy	November 2, 2006-January 21, 2007
Kiki Smith	November 16, 2006-February 11, 2007
Terence Koh	January - May 2007
Gordon Matta-Clark	Opens February 2007
Lorna Simpson	Opens Spring 2007

*The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. For information, please call 1-800 WHITNEY or visit [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)*

***Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria:***

Trace	June 30 - November 12, 2006
Burgeoning Geometries	December 7, 2006 - March 11, 2007

*The Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria is located at 120 Park Avenue at 42nd Street. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursdays 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sculpture Court Hours: Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sundays and holidays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Whitney Museum at Altria is funded by Altria Group, Inc. Admission is free. Free gallery talks are offered every Wednesday and Friday at 1:00 p.m. For further information, please call (917) 663-2453.*