



For Immediate Release

September 15, 2009

Extraordinary Realist Painter

Rackstraw Downes

What: Rackstraw Downes **Lecture**

Where: Tipton Hall

When: October 26, 2009 @ 6pm

How Much: \$5 General Public | \$2.50 students/seniors/SFAI members

The Santa Fe Art Institute is proud to bring you the extraordinary realist painter, **Rackstraw Downes** as part of our 2009 Visiting Artist & Lecture season, **Memory: Shadow and Light | Art as individual/collective memory**. Join us for his lecture on Monday, October 26th in Tipton Hall on the College of Santa Fe campus.

Rackstraw Downes is a British-born realist painter and author. Downes' work combines the familiar with a sense of minimalism. His long, sprawling landscapes lack human subjects, yet they heighten man's interaction with the environment. The large public spaces in his work explore the effects of light and atmosphere and look to capture a specific moment in time. Downes' paintings are full of meticulous detail gained from months of regular plein-air sessions. His work is in the collections of many museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

In a 2008 New York Times story, Ken Johnson said, "He [Downes] is impressively skillful. His panoramic views of New York streets with steel bridges looming overhead or of sunbaked Southwestern landscapes are so thoroughly detailed and faithful to light and atmosphere that they could be mistaken for copies of wide-angle photographs [...] What quickens it all is the feeling of being extraordinarily alive to the moment. Mr. Downes favors subjects that would seem mundane, drab or sadly desolate by calendar-art standards, but he paints them so attentively that the resultant images have a breathtaking, even shocking lucidity. In this respect they are paradoxical. You have the sense of seeing a situation suddenly, all at once, as if you'd just stepped outdoors from a dark room. Yet you can also see that the paintings were produced by a patient, incremental process. There is something soothing about that for a viewer exhausted by the frantic pace of contemporary, hypermediated experience. Looking at these paintings slows you down and revives your senses."

For more information, images, or interview requests, please contact Michelle Laflamme-Childs at mchilds@sfai.org or call (505) 424-5050.

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The Santa Fe Art Institute, an independent educational non-profit organization founded in 1985, is committed to programs that nurture artists and enhance and promote the arts as an essential element of American culture and society.

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