

PRESS RELEASE

Saint Clair Cemin

New Sculpture

Opening reception: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 8th, 1999

June 8th – July 31st, 1999

Cheim & Read is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculptures by Saint Clair Cemin. Born in 1951, Cemin grew up in Cruz Alta, the heart of Brazil's cowboy country. His early childhood was spent on a rural farm without electricity and running water. In 1974 he moved to Paris where he studied for four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He relocated to New York in 1978 and began making prints. After seeing a Joseph Beuys retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in 1979, he started making sculpture. His diverse background is reflected in his work that combines sophistication with naiveté, refinement with rawness, classicism with playfulness, and sensuousness with rigor.

The recent white marble pieces to be shown reflect Cemin's interest in classical materials and a traditional approach to sculpture. The historic subject matter of chimeras, pioneers, women, and giants is portrayed a-traditionally. By utilizing classical references and materials, Cemin undermines our collective memory. The sculptures are not exactly what they appear: classical is contemporary, history and imagination are combined, producing Ceminian sphinxes.

He has become known in the international art world as an artist of protean intelligence and prolific ingenuity. Playing havoc on the hieratic languages of modernism, Cemin's sculpted objects indulge an agenda of material and figural diversity. Equally at ease carving wood, chiseling marble, shaping clay, or modeling plaster to be cast in bronze, Cemin has championed a return to the "craft" of object-making. As the artist recently stated: "I believe that whoever wants to separate craft from art, wants also to separate the upper class from the lower, intellect from the hands, work from pleasure, religion from philosophy, butter from bread—the list is endless. Craft, the use of one's hands and skill, is simply a way of thinking."

This year Cemin's sculpture was the subject of a one person exhibition at the Arts Club of Chicago.