

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
March 1995

PROJECTS: TOM FRIEDMAN

March 28 - May 18, 1995

The work of Tom Friedman (b. 1965) is the subject of The Museum of Modern Art's next **PROJECTS** exhibition, on view from March 28 to May 18, 1995. Organized by Robert Storr, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, **PROJECTS: TOM FRIEDMAN** features a selection of sculptures and a photograph created between 1990 and 1995. A member of the young generation of artists who are seeking alternatives to modernist and postmodernist high style, Friedman creates labor-intensive, generally diminutive works made of mundane materials and filled with witty allusions to a variety of contemporary practices.

"Shunning the grand gestures of the previous ten years, while obliquely inquiring into the 'big ideas' of the two decades before, Friedman confines the excesses of his work to the time and attention required to make it," writes Mr. Storr. "One may, as a result of this exemplary dedication, look briskly at the results, but like all fine-tuned forms, his have an essential, palpable seriousness and a funny way of calling one back to wonder how they got there and why."

Friedman applies extraordinary processes to ordinary materials -- bubble gum, dust, soap, tape, spaghetti -- resulting in unexpected, often paradoxical transformations. Many of Friedman's works featured in the **PROJECTS** exhibition, like an eye-straining self-portrait carved from an aspirin tablet, display a witty knack for visual economy and logical sleight of hand. The seemingly straightforward *My Foot*, Friedman's approximation of a ruler, was

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constructed from memory, without any measuring devices; just over ten inches long, it represents the artist's idea of a foot. Another dimension is added to the work when one considers the meaning of the colloquial phrase "my foot!"

Friedman's works also explore the relationship between mundane occurrences and large natural forces. *Dustball* (1994) has the look of a planet viewed from afar while being, quite literally, "down to earth." Other works make oblique reference to precedents from the conceptual tradition to which Friedman belongs. One untitled 1994 photograph of a man lying against a ceiling plays off Bruce Nauman's 1973 video *Tony Sinking into the Floor, Face Up and Face Down* (currently on view through May 23 in the Museum's **BRUCE NAUMAN** exhibition). While Nauman's work is marked by pronounced anguish, Friedman's is a mock Ascension that invokes a classical motif with deadpan surrealism.

Tom Friedman was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and lives in Middletown, Connecticut. He received his B.F.A. in 1988 in graphic illustration from Washington University and his M.F.A. in 1990 in sculpture from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Friedman's works have been exhibited in Europe and in the United States.

PROJECTS, a series of exhibitions devoted to the work of contemporary artists, is made possible by generous grants from the Lannan Foundation, The Bohen Foundation, and The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art. The next exhibition in the series is **PROJECTS: PAUL McCARTHY**, on view from June 1 through July 18, 1995.

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