

franklin parrasch gallery

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For Immediate Release – October 2009

Mark Gonzales *Round N' Round*

October 16 – November 28, 2009



Mark Gonzales, 2009
Photo: William Strobeck

Franklin Parrasch Gallery is pleased to present *Round N' Round* – an exhibition which includes the premier of a new film and sculpture, as well as drawings, poems and correspondences by Mark Gonzales. Gonzales, who has been skateboarding professionally since he was a teenager is a prime mover in bringing the inherently improvisational, free-ranging attitude manifested in skateboarding's engagement with the built and graphic environment to a wider audience. Gonzales's work has been exhibited internationally, and his skating has been documented by Spike Jonze among other filmmakers.

Gonzales's approach to both art and life embodies a philosophy of perpetual motion. Nothing stagnates; everything connects and continues. His pursuits in drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, and filmmaking are integrally aligned with his entire way of being. To see Gonzales skate is nothing like watching other professional athletes as they perform. His processes and methods of decision-making are predicated less upon sheer athleticism than upon a personal vision of skating as a medium.

Gonzales charts his movements and interactions within existing space in the manner of an installation artist. Filmmaker Werner Herzog's remarks in a 2008 *New Yorker* magazine interview with high wire artist Philippe Petit could aptly apply to Gonzales when speaking of "an ecstasy of truth" in Petit's performance: "he's discovering walking in the sky, in the clouds means a form of ecstasy – a quintessential metaphor of an ecstatic moment. There's a truth in that we can somehow function beyond our limitations."

Round N' Round, which includes recent sculpture and video, as well as a selection from two decades of drawings, poems, and correspondence Gonzales sent to Jocko Weyland, author and curator of the Elk Gallery, defines and further contextualizes the artist's philosophical pursuit of skating. These are brimming over with evidence of influences, cultural touchstones, and historical figures both obscure and well known that Gonzales' incorporates into his work, creating a singular artistic universe that is profoundly allusive and interconnected. In this sense his visual and textual conversation with the wider world around him is shown to be correspondence on a grander scale, an all-encompassing call and response with everything and anything he encounters in those "ecstatic" moments as well in the detritus and scraps of daily life. As Weyland said in a *New York Times* article about Gonzales in 2003, "the artist Robert Rauschenberg famously declared that he wanted to exist in the gap between art and life. Mark Gonzales performs in that space every day."

Gonzales has participated in exhibitions around the world including solo exhibitions at Museum Het Domein, Netherlands, and his now legendary Skate / Ballet performance at Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Germany, as well as a show of new work this past summer entitled *South West* curated by Emma Reeves at the Half Gallery, New York. For the past five years Gonzales's work has toured the United States and Europe as part of the exhibition *Beautiful Losers* conceived and curated by Christian Strike and Aaron Rose. Mark Gonzales was born in Los Angeles, CA in 1969, and currently lives and works in New York City.

For images, biography, and further information please contact the gallery Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm.

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