

G L A D S T O N E

Ugo Rondinone presents three interconnected bodies of work across Gladstone's Chelsea locations

Exploring German Romanticism, Rondinone reanimates commonplace objects, exploring themes of philosophical tensions

Gladstone is pleased to present an exhibition of three distinct yet interrelated bodies of work by Ugo Rondinone in both Chelsea locations. Developed throughout his practice, these large-scale landscape drawings, window, and sun sculptures speak directly to Rondinone's continued exploration of German Romanticism and its key artistic figure, Caspar David Friedrich. Reanimating commonplace objects—such as tree branches or window frames—in his own Neo-Romantic signature, he creates a lyrical world of his own. This formal and generic diversity mines the fecund aesthetic and philosophical tensions central to his work: nature and humanity, exterior world and inner life, expansion and intimacy, organic and artificial. Rondinone stylizes these dichotomies into new physical and temporal sites of self-reflection and universal connection.

Rondinone's sepia drawings of wooded landscapes have been foundational to his oeuvre since 1989. Reminiscent of the drawings of Romantic landscape painters Rodolphe Bresdin and Samuel Palmer, the haptic idiosyncrasies of Rondinone's hatching gestures manifest in absorbing tableau of knotted trees, twisting branches, and overabundant foliage. In this way, they extend the tradition of the *wanderzeichner* or wandering draughtsman—a sylvan progenitor to the urban flaneur—into the present day. Exchanging plein air realism for imaginative fiction, these large-scale drawings come from an archive of the artist's own naturalist sketches of individual flora; they are then patchworked together into a world of Rondinone's creation. Seducing the viewer into darkness, these drawings recall nature's central role in the Romantic conception of the sublime. In his *Theories of Garden Art* (1775/77), noted German philosopher and landscape designer C.C.L. Hirschfeld presaged the soul expanding properties of such expansive and dramatic vistas: Rondinone's beguiling landscapes, too, inspire one to feel that one "no longer belongs to the everyday, but instead is a being of power and determination manifesting far beyond the point at which we stand."

Gladstone's 21st street location will feature a monumental sun sculpture, a single ring of gilded bronze, cast from encircling tree branches. Blunt ends of the individual tree trunks and the punctae of twigs bind the sun to the ground, even as it seems to hang in the air. Evoking the celestial body using antecedents of the earth, Rondinone's sun celebrates the lyrical paradoxes that contour ontological boundaries and how they eventually collapse via the aesthetic gesture's potential to transform. Both spaces include examples of his series of window sculptures—metal casts of nineteenth-century window casings each named for one of Friedrich's paintings, including *drifting clouds*, where this exhibition takes its name. Defying the expectation of revealing a "heavenly panorama" of the kind writer Kurt Waller noted he saw in the views from Friedrich's studio, the burnished opacity of these windowpanes marks a key distinction in Rondinone's practice. For him, the shift between complete absorption in the natural world's sublimity to the solitude of self-reflection hearkens to dramatic tensions that distinguish the Romantic mode, while also recalling nineteenth century critic Walter

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Pater's evocation of sensual experience as ultimately "the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world."

Exhibition Details

drifting clouds

September 22 – November 16, 2018

530 West 21st Street

New York, NY 10011

About Ugo Rondinone

Ugo Rondinone (b. 1964, Brunnen, Switzerland) studied at the Universität für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna before moving to New York in 1997 where he currently lives and works. His work has been the subject of solo presentations at the Centre George Pompidou, Paris (2003); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2006); Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois (2013); Rockbund Art Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2016); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Roma, Rome (RS13); Carre D'Art, Nimes, France (2016); Berkeley Art Museum, California (2017); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2017); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2017); Belvedere, Vienna (2021); Tamayo Museum, Mexico City (RSRR); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2022); Petit Palais, Paris (2022); Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista di Venezia, Venice (2022); The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva (2023); Parrish Museum, Water Mill, New York (2023); Städel Museum, Frankfurt (2023); Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, New York (2023); Museum SAN, Wonju, Korea (2024); Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland (2024); Würth Museum, Kunzelsau, Germany (2024); and Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2024).

About Gladstone Gallery

Gladstone is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

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