

# GLADSTONE

## Ugo Rondinone Explores the intersection of nature and the human condition at Gladstone in New York

Gladstone is pleased to present *the sun at 4pm*, an exhibition that continues Ugo Rondinone's decades-long examination of the link between the natural world and the human condition. Extending the artist's mining of the German Romantic movement, and particularly Caspar David Friedrich, as a primary source of reference, the four distinct bodies of work on view – *mountain*, *sun*, *waterfall*, and *cloud* – present a setting wherein the commonplace of the everyday gives way to the sublimity of environmental phenomena.

In formations that immediately call to mind rock spire outcroppings, or “hoodoo,” endemic to the Badlands of North America, Rondinone's mountain sculptures consist of rocks vertically stacked on concrete plinths of varying sizes. Austere in their reference to Minimalist composition and titling, the artist mitigates severity in both the Day-Glo coloring of the boulders, as well as the deferential nod to the tradition of stone stacking, a practice seen from prehistoric dolmens to contemporary cairns. In these gestures, Rondinone extends the specificity of art history to a universality gleaned from cult objects that exist worldwide. It is this ability to meld the romanticism of the individual into the transcendence of the metaphysical that ties together all works in the exhibition.

Forever preserved in a state of precariousness, the mountain sculptures also manifest a suspension of time. This notion of temporality carries over to Rondinone's new series of sculptures, *sun*. Composed of branches cast in aluminum and then gilded, the world's oldest gauge of time is rendered static. As the exhibition's poetic title indicates, this interior presentation of an exterior natural occurrence calls into question not only our conception of time's passage, but also the ways in which society turns nature into artificial intervals. In the same breath, by fashioning abstracted solar forms from the branches of real-life trees, Rondinone venerates the quotidian world as nothing short of extraordinary.

Modeled by hand in clay and cast in aluminum, the spiraling waterfall works seem to simultaneously collapse downwards and expand upwards, creating a visual tension between gravity and ethereality. The cloud canvases capture a similar paradox, in which the painted abstract surface points to an infinite celestial world beyond the gallery's walls, but the cartoon-like borders root the works in an unambiguous literalism. By rendering such incongruity through beautiful visual means, Rondinone sets the stage for an existential reflection on artificial versus natural, banal versus sublime.

### Exhibition Details

*the sun at 4pm*

September 23 – October 29, 2016

530 West 21st Street

New York, NY 10011

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## **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.

## **Press Contact**

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