

Serpentine Gallery

Press Release

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

1 June - 16 July 2000

Sponsored by **Bloomberg**

Cuban-born American Felix Gonzalez-Torres is widely recognised as being one of the most important artists of the late twentieth century. Born in 1957, he went in 1979 to study in New York where he lived and worked until his death in 1996. He has had major exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Park, Washington D.C. and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. This will be his first major exhibition in Britain.

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Within his lifetime Gonzalez-Torres expressed a particular kinship with the Serpentine Gallery's position both in terms of its programme, as well as its physical location in the middle of a public park. A core theme of his work is the relationship between the public and private: What defines the public and the private space? What is the role of the public institution versus the private owner? Where is the line between personal and public responsibility? This exhibition will address these ideas both at the Serpentine and also beyond the Gallery's walls through collaborations with: Camden Arts Centre, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal College of Art, as well as twelve billboards across London.

Gonzalez-Torres's work also explores how the context in which art is seen can shape its meaning and how a work can change the meaning of a particular place. As he left only ideals regarding the production and installation of his works, each exhibition is a result of the creative partnership between his ideas and those who engage with them – the curator, the institution, the viewer and the community.

The involvement of the viewer in Gonzalez-Torres's art extends even further than the audience's relationship to the location. He is particularly known for the participatory nature of his work, inviting viewers to help themselves to his large stacks of paper or his installations made up from coloured sweets, works which are replenished throughout the exhibition. This constantly renewable art challenges the idea of sculpture as a permanent or static monument and its malleability not only addresses the works' generosity, it also confronts issues of responsibility, ownership and immortality.

Using familiar, but evocative, materials such as sweets, paper, light bulbs, jigsaws, offset photo prints, billboards and beads, Gonzalez-Torres creates an implosion of meaning and emotion, addressing and inspiring shared human concerns such as individual and cultural identities, memory, travel, time, generosity, exchange, authority, love, loss and desire.

A fully illustrated catalogue published by the Serpentine Gallery will accompany the exhibition.

Press enquiries: **Rose Dempsey** rosed@serpentinegallery.org **020 7298 1520**

The Serpentine Gallery is open daily 10am to 6pm. Admission is free
Public Information 0171 298 1515. www.serpentinegallery.org



Felix Gonzalez-Torres Off-site projects

Gonzalez-Torres's work also explores how the context in which art is seen can shape its meaning and how a work can change the meaning of a particular place. The exhibition will address this idea both at the Serpentine and also beyond the Gallery's walls through satellite sites, which pay tribute to the artist's original spirit of inviting viewers to discover his work in spaces outside the art gallery.

Billboards 1 – 31 June 2000

Gonzalez-Torres's billboards are amongst the most memorable public art works of the past decade. For one month from 1 June *"Untitled"*, 1991 will appear on roadsides, buildings and in London Underground stations across London:

Barnet (Burlington Parade, Junction of Gratton Terrace), Camden (152 Royal College Street), Hounslow (Junction of Great West Road & Boston Manor Road), Islington (612 Holloway Road), Knightsbridge (Underground Station), South Kensington (Underground Station), Lambeth (169 Clapham High Street and Atlantic Road, opposite Brixton Station), Lancaster Gate (Underground Station), Tower Hamlets (599 Commercial Road), Paddington (Underground Station), Finsbury Square (Bloomberg)

All Billboards made possible by Bloomberg

Camden Arts Centre 19 May – 16 July

The Serpentine Gallery's partnership with Camden Arts Centre will present the artist's major outdoor work *"Untitled" (America)*, 1994-1995, in which garlands of light bulbs are strung across Lymington Road, opposite the Centre. Illumination times: dusk until midnight

Camden Arts Centre
Arkwright Road, London NW3
Telephone 020 7435 2643 / 020 7435 5224
Admission free

Victoria and Albert Museum 1 June – 16 July

A unique opportunity for visitors to the Victoria and Albert Museum's Print Room, Department of Prints, Drawings and Paintings, to request a private viewing of ten of the artist's major photographic works in the form of jigsaws, as well as of his interactive work, *"Untitled", Album*, 1992, a photograph album filled with personal mementoes belonging to, and selected by, the current owner.

Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road, London SW7
Recorded Information 0870 442 0808
Open daily 10am – 5.45pm