

# TEMPLON



Press release

17 July 2023

**GEORGE SEGAL**

**Nocturnal Fragments**

**6 September — 28 October 2023**



*Blimpies, 1999*

Plaster, paint, wood and glass, 244 × 265 × 122 cm — 96 × 104 1/4 × 48 in.

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Templon's New York space is celebrating its first anniversary by paying tribute to American master painter and sculptor George Segal (1924-2000).

A pioneer of installations combining plaster and everyday objects, the Bronx native began his career as an abstract painter. When he discovered the use of pre-cut plaster bandages in the early 1960s, he abandoned paint as a medium and, at the height of the Pop Art movement, turned his focus on three-dimensional paintings with plaster casts applied directly to living models. This unique visual language soon became his signature, opening the door to endless formal possibilities. Both spontaneous and frozen, his compositions reveal an unexpected poetic force as well as a social and political radicality.

The exhibition takes visitors on a journey over 25 years of the artist's career, with pieces spanning the period from 1972 to 1999. George Segal's work initially embraced a realist style before shifting in the 1970s to a freer expression. His colored work in the 1980s engaged in a dialogue with the history of art, featuring subtle references to Bonnard, Cézanne and Degas, before embracing a more expressionist style in the 1990s. The later works fuse sculpture and painting, opening the door to a new scope of expression by means of color and light. Segal's "Nocturnal Fragments," assemblages of ordinary activities in realistic settings, are more than mere observations of the quotidian, but prompt a consideration of the human condition. Mysterious, possibly even unsettling, these tableaux are often a

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springboard for an existentialist questioning of the individual and consumer society. Capturing isolated moments of ennui, slices of the private body, and secluded intimacies, Segal's fragments envision the whole.

Born in 1924 in New York, George Segal lived and worked in New Jersey, USA, until his death in 2000. The artist was discovered at a group Pop Art collective exhibition in since 1962. Since then George Segal's work has been widely shown in the USA and internationally.

He was famed for his spectacular public commissions, such as his monuments commemorating the holocaust (Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco) and the Kent State Massacre or championing LGBT rights with Gay Liberation, part of the Stone Wall Monument in Sheridan Square, New York. His many solo exhibitions include retrospectives in 1978 at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 1997 at the Montreal Musée des Beaux-Arts, in 1998 at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C, and in 2002 at the Utsunomiya Museum of Art, Utsunomiya, Japan and State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg in Russia.

His work features in the world's leading museums, including MoMA, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, MAM Paris, Kunsthaus Zurich and the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Considered, against his will, as a pioneer of hyperrealism, he was a major influence on artists such as Duane Hanson and Ron Mueck. Over recent years his pieces have regularly been presented alongside the work by new generations of sculptors, for example, with the travelling European exhibition Hyperrealism Sculpture. *This is not a body* and *Corporeal* at SF MOMA (until April 2024).

Templon presented George Segal's work for the first time in Paris in 1979 as part of the group show *La peinture américaine* as well as at two further shows, in Paris in 2017 and Brussels in 2018.