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Rackstraw Downes, *Presidio: In the Sand Hills Looking East with ATV Tracks and Water Tower*, 2012, oil on canvas, 16 1/2 x 65 1/4 inches. Courtesy of Betty Cuninghame Gallery, New York

Rackstraw Downes: A Wider View / March 5–April 5, 2020

Thursday, March 5

4:30 PM: Presentations and discussion, Scheuer Room, Kohlberg Hall

Introduction by List Gallery Director Andrea Packard, exhibition curator

Rackstraw Downes: A Wider View, a short video by Tess Wei

"The Radical Possibility of Seeing What is Directly in Front of You," by John Yau

John Yau has published more than 50 books of poetry, artists' books, fiction, and art criticism. Yau was the arts editor of *The Brooklyn Rail* from 2007-2011, and has subsequently served as weekend editor for the online magazine, *Hyperallergic*. Yau's numerous honors include awards from Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

5:30—7:00 PM: Opening reception, List Gallery, Lang Performing Arts Center

Sunday, April 5

4:00 PM: "As Far as the Eye Can See," List Gallery talk by Robert Storr '72

Robert Storr is an artist, critic, curator, and the author of numerous numerous books, catalogs, essays, and reviews. From 1990 until 2002, first as curator and then as senior curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, he organized numerous exhibitions, including *Modern Art Despite Modernism* and retrospectives of Tony Smith, Chuck Close, Gerhard Richter, Max Beckmann, and Elizabeth Murray. In 2002, he was named the first Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. From 2006 to 2016, he served as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Dean of the Yale University School of Art. In 2007, he became the first American artistic director of the Venice Biennale. His many awards include two medals from the French Ministry of Culture, five honorary doctorates, including one from Swarthmore College, a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, a Penny McCall Foundation Grant for painting, and a Norton Family Foundation Curator Grant.

3:00–5:00 PM: Closing Reception *All are welcome. Refreshments will be served.*



Rackstraw Downes, *Study for Two Dumps in the Meadowlands, April, Lowtide, A Grassfire*, 1986, oil on canvas mounted on board, 7 x 41 3/4 inches, Courtesy of the artist and Betty Cuninghame Gallery, New York.

The List Gallery will present *Rackstraw Downes: A Wider View*, March 5–April 5, 2020.

On Thursday, March 5, List Gallery Director Andrea Packard will provide an overview of the exhibition; noted art critic John Yau will give a talk about the artist's empirical approach; and Rackstraw Downes will reflect on his more than 50-year career via a short video interview filmed by Tess Wei. The event will take place 4:30-5:30 PM in the Scheuer Room, Kohlberg Hall. The opening reception for *Rackstraw Downes: A Wider View* will follow: 5:30-7:00 p.m. in the List Gallery, Lang Performing Arts Center. On April 5 the preeminent curator, Robert Storr, will give a gallery talk titled "As Far as the Eye Can See" at 2:00 PM. A closing reception with refreshments will follow until 5:00 p.m. List Gallery hours are Tuesdays through Sundays, Noon–5:00 PM.

Curated by List Gallery Director Andrea Packard, *Rackstraw Downes: A Wider View* features more than 20 paintings created by the artist between 1966 and 2017. The selected works reflect the artist's intense focus on the appearance, history, and evolving character of his chosen subjects, be they farmlands in Maine, architectural interiors in Manhattan, landfills in New Jersey, or radio towers in Texas. This mini-survey presents acclaimed panoramas—one measuring more than nine feet long—side by side with smaller and lesser-known landscapes, portraits, and figure studies from the mid-1960s. Rackstraw Downes offers viewers a broader perspective, not just by working in panoramic formats, but by synthesizing empirical observations over months and years, challenging conventions that too often alienate us from our changing environment. *A Wider View* also allows us to appreciate the consistency of Downes's creative practice over the five decades since his first one-person exhibition, which took place at Swarthmore College in the fall of 1969.

Artist's Biography: Rackstraw Downes was born in England in 1939. He received a BA from Cambridge in 1961 and a BFA and MFA from Yale University in 1963 and 1964 respectively. He became a United States citizen in 1980. He is the recipient of the Guggenheim (1998) and MacArthur (2009) Fellowships, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1999). A traveling museum retrospective, *Rackstraw Downes: Onsite Paintings, 1972-2008*, was organized by the Parrish Art Museum in 2010. Notably, he delivered the Ninth Annual Raymond Lecture for the Archives of American Art and in 2011, he was featured on PBS's critically acclaimed Art 21 series. Downes is also the subject of the film *Rackstraw Downes: a painter*, by Rima Yamazaki.

Downes's numerous essays on art have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, and *Art Journal*. In 2014, Edgewise Press published a collection of his essays titled *Nature and Art Are Physical: Writings on Art, 1967-2008*. Other publications by the artist include *Under the Gowanus and Razor-Wire Journal* (Turning the Head Press, 2000); *In Relation to the Whole: Three Essays from Three Decades—1973, 1981, 1996* (Edgewise Press 2004). Downes introduced and edited, *Fairfield Porter: Art in Its Own Terms* (Zoland Books, 1979, reprinted by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2008). *Rackstraw Downes*, a monograph with essays by Robert Storr, Sanford Schwartz and Rackstraw Downes, was published by Princeton University Press in 2005.

This exhibition was made possible by the Donald J. Gordon Visiting Artist Fund and the ongoing support of the Gordon Family. An accompanying catalog, with essays by Andrea Packard and Alfred Mac Adam, was made possible by the Kaori Kitao Endowment for the List Gallery and additional gifts from Kaori Kitao, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor Emerita of Art History, Swarthmore College.