

Press Release

SENGA NENGUDI

Asp-Rx

A New INstallation 2005

October 20 – December 10, 2005

Reception: Thursday, October 20th, 6 – 8:30pm

Thomas Erben is pleased to open his new location at 526 W 26 Street, with *Asp-Rx*, an INstallation by Senga Nengudi whose solo exhibition launched the gallery in 1996. This show follows her widely acclaimed 2003 exhibition *RSVP - Nylon Mesh Pieces 1975-77* (the pantyhose sculptures), which led to her participation in the 2004 Carnegie International.

On view will be a sand installation from the artist's ongoing "Sandmindings" series. The different materials employed are several kinds of sand, pigment, candles, discarded mufflers, the remains of a chair, irrigation tubing, and large Sumi ink drawings, which carry the work from floor to wall. The artist comments: "My work moves along the earth's floor and cemented ground following its vibration. Ear to the ground anticipating coming events, I map them as I hear them in tones natural and primary, some blending on their own with materials natural and man made."

An important proponent of the 70's African American avant-garde (which also included other Los Angeles based artists such as David Hammons and Maren Hassinger), Nengudi creates an aesthetic language out of a redirection of materials. Each element is chosen for its unique history and remains recognizable, yet is subject to a multiplication of possible readings through unexpected juxtapositions and formal use. Then placed within an abandoned ritual space, her installations draw from African ceremonial traditions, which she uses as concepts for sculptural space and as models for performance.

Nengudi states: "The installation (*Asp-Rx*) is reflective of the power of the mind to create both positive and negative thoughts; the proportion of which determines the quality of one's life. As with snake venom, degree is key within thoughts - being either a destructive poison or life saving serum."

A legendary figure, Nengudi's work has been included in such major international exhibitions as *NowHere – Incandescent*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark, 1996; *Out of Action: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, MoCA, Los Angeles, 1998; The Carnegie International, Pittsburg, PA, 2004; and *Non Toccare la Donna Bianca*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy, 2004, curated by Francesco Bonami. Nengudi's work is part of such national collections as the Carnegie Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Private collectors include Craig Robins, Miami Beach, Florida; Burt Aaron, Detroit, Michigan; and Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy, to name a few.

For further information and visuals, please visit our website www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery at (212) 645-8701. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10-6.