

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Regen Projects
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STEPHAN BALKENHOL: NEW SCULPTURE

March 2 - March 30, 2002

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Opening reception: Saturday, March 2, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Regen Projects is pleased to present an exhibition of new sculpture by German artist **Stephan Balkenhol**. A student of Ulrich Ruckreim in Hamburg, **Balkenhol's** exploration of the figure emerged from the minimalist tradition in German sculpture. **Balkenhol's** sculptures are roughly hewn from single blocks of wood, though the artist professes that it is not the material itself that interests him, but the spontaneity and immediacy it allows in creating his forms--more than metal or stone could allow. The figures are painted and cut from the same block as their pedestals. Unlike Expressionists such as Kirchner and Baselitz who use color to heighten the figure's expressive possibilities, the features of **Balkenhol's** figures are bluntly distinguished by a minimal application of paint. Raw wood is left to represent skin or flesh. The distant expression of many of these figures evokes the seemingly objective gaze of photographers such as August Sanders and Thomas Ruff. This cool evenness of expression contrasts the expressive quality of sculpted wood and the strong presence of the hand.

In the catalogue accompanying **Balkenhol's** solo exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum, Neal Benezra writes, **Balkenhol's** sculptures "hover tantalizingly between anonymity and likeness, between muteness and narrative." With their common dress and neutral expressions, **Balkenhol's** subjects are a sort of "everyperson," addressing the narrative implications of the figure in their lack of distinction.

(Neal Benezra. Stephan Balkenhol: Refiguring a Tradition. Hirshhorn Museum. 1995.)

Balkenhol has remarked that the figure is "so heavy with meaning: human figures always have to do with self-reflection on some level... they can work like a mirror." **Balkenhol** counteracts this by generalizing his subjects, isolating only the most subtle nuances of character in the gesture of a hand or the bend of a knee.

(Stephan Balkenhol. The Arts Club of Chicago. 1998)

Born in 1957, **Balkenhol** lives and works in Karlsruhe, Germany and Meisenthal, France. **Balkenhol** has exhibited extensively throughout Europe and the United States. Solo exhibitions have been organized by the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea de Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, the Kunstmuseum in Wolfsburg, the Arts Club of Chicago, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C..

An opening reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, March 2 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Regen Projects. For further information please contact Shaun Caley Regen or Lisa Overduin at the gallery.

