



Installation view of *Light and Space* (2007), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RED DRAWING
WHITE DRAWING
BLACK PAINTING

**ROBERT IRWIN CREATES A NEW SITE-CONDITIONED
INSTALLATION AT PACEWILDENSTEIN**

NEW YORK, January 14, 2009—PaceWildenstein is pleased to present a new site-conditioned installation by Robert Irwin, one of the most influential artists working in the United States over the past five decades and a pioneer of the “Light and Space” movement of the 1960s. The installation relates to a recent permanent commission by the Indianapolis Museum of Art, an exhibition at White Cube Mason’s Yard, London, and a major survey at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in 2007-2008. *Red Drawing White Drawing Black Painting* will be on view at 545 West 22nd Street, New York City from January 23 through February 28, 2009. The artist will be present for an opening reception on Thursday, January 22nd from 6-8 p.m.

“Art has always been a focusing device—the frame is a focusing device. What I’m trying to do,” Irwin once explained, “is eliminate the frame, eliminate all those distractions, and put you in direct relationship to the real experience and the real power, which is your ability to perceive.” Irwin’s work is a response to the

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specific circumstances and conditions of each project site that he takes on; he draws his inspiration from the spatial, architectural, historical, and other contextual elements governing the space, perceiving art as a “conditional activity” that “exists in the real world” and “takes its cues from the real world.” With this new installation, Irwin transforms the 545 West 22nd Street gallery, immersing the viewer in a series of perceptual phenomenon that alters and awakens them to their relationship with the space surrounding them. “Beauty is around you every single day and every moment,” Irwin once explained; “An art that puts you in touch with that is essentially putting you in touch with probably the most powerful part of our lives. The role of art” is to “bring you to a point where you’re aware”...“connecting you to something that you are around all of the time but that you are not focused on.”

Red Drawing White Drawing Black Painting relates to an important site-conditioned permanent commission by the Indianapolis Museum of Art, unveiled in October of 2008 in honor of the museum’s 125th anniversary. This commission is Irwin’s first permanent indoor installation at a museum. In *Light and Space III*, 2008, Irwin created a 60 x 60 foot screen framing a series of white floor-to-ceiling scrim panels with fluorescent lights mounted at right angles in a non-repeating, grid-like pattern. The installation encompasses museum goers in a tunnel of light as they move between the panels and the three main escalators of the museum.

Irwin’s practice of using white fluorescent tubes in a non-repetitive, grid-like pattern to combine light, space, and sculpture evolved from his installation *Light and Space*, 2007, installed at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego as part of a major survey spanning over fifty years of Irwin’s work. This seminal exhibition included Irwin’s early Abstract Expressionist paintings, reductive canvases, and early sculptural objects, and featured five new site-conditioned installation works created for the museum’s galleries. *Primaries and Secondaries*, held in two locations (the Jacobs Building from October 21, 2007 through February 2008 and 1001 Kettner from October 21, 2007 through April 13, 2008), was the largest exhibition of Irwin’s work since 1993. ***Red Drawing White Drawing Black Painting*** is also connected to Irwin’s recent installations, *Light and Space II*, 2008, and *Black³*, 2008, on view at White Cube Mason’s Yard, London from September 17 through October 19, 2008.

Robert Irwin has been one of the most pivotal and influential artists working in America over the past five decades. Irwin began his career as an Abstract Expressionist; however, by the late 1960s he had moved

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away from painting to become one of the founders of the West Coast Light and Space Movement, using ephemeral materials such as scrim, lighting, and orientation to alter and heighten the viewers' perception of the space in which they encountered his work. Since the early 80s, Irwin has achieved an international reputation for his site-conditioned works in public spaces, which often make intimate use of architecture, site conditions, historical context, natural elements, plantings and topographic features. Irwin is responsible for the lush transformation of the Central Gardens at the J. Paul Getty Center, Los Angeles, and the architectural design and grounds for DIA Art Foundation's museum, DIA: Beacon in Beacon, New York.

Robert Irwin (b. 1928, Long Beach, California) spent his youth in Los Angeles, and received his art education at L.A.'s Art Institutes: Otis (1948-50), Jepson (1951), and Chouinard (1952-1954). He later went on to teach at Chouinard from 1957-58 and then at The University of California, Los Angeles, in 1962. Six years later, he developed the graduate program at the University of California, Irvine, working with a number of now successful artists such as Ed Ruscha, Larry Bell, Vija Celmins, Alexis Smith and Chris Burden, among others. Irwin continues to teach, but exclusively in response to invitations to lecture or to participate in symposia and seminars with students and professionals. The artist has visited the art, architecture, philosophy, and perceptual psychology departments of over 150 universities and art institutes in 48 states.

Robert Irwin was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship from 1976-77 and a National Endowment for the Arts' Artist Grant in 1978. He was also the first artist to receive the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship ("Genius") Award from 1984-89. Irwin has been awarded Honorary Doctorates in Art from the San Francisco Art Institute (1979) and Otis-Parson's Art Institute, CA (1992). Irwin has also been the John J. Hill professor at the University of Minnesota (1981), the J. Paul Getty lecturer at the University of Southern California (1986), the Cullinan professor at Rice University (1987-88), the Andrew Ritchie lecturer at Yale University (1988), the Yaseen lecturer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1990), and the Kiley lecturer at Harvard University (2001). In 2007, Irwin became an Elected Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Irwin's work can be found in more than thirty public collections worldwide, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; The Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Cleveland Museum of Art; Dallas Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Dia Art Foundation, New York; The J. Paul

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Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Indianapolis Museum of Art; Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

For more information on Robert Irwin and *Red Drawing White Drawing Black Painting*, please contact Jennifer Benz Joy at jjoy@pacewildenstein.com or Lauren Staub at lstaub@pacewildenstein.com or call 212.421.3292.

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