

NOHRA HAIME GALLERY

ADELSON GALLERIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ADAM STRAUS TWO EXHIBITIONS

**NOVEMBER 23 – DECEMBER 24, 2016**

*New Monograph Coincides with Exhibitions*



*Glitch at the Edge of Antarctica, 2016*

*"Awe is everywhere. It just seems to be getting more and more cropped."*

*-Adam Straus*

NEW YORK – The work of Adam Straus, spanning a three and a half decade career, will be on view at Nohra Haime Gallery and Adelson Galleries from November 22 – December 24, 2016. The two exhibitions at 730 Fifth Avenue will showcase paintings, works on paper, sculpture, and photography. Straus is known for his majestic and luminous depictions of the sublime, which are often saturated with a deep concern about social and environmental issues. His penetrating dark humor can transport the viewer to post-apocalyptic worlds and often offers a wry observation on how humans have altered the natural landscape. The exhibitions coincide with the publication of a new monograph (Gli Ori, Italy, November 2016). An opening reception will be held on Tuesday, November 22, from 6-8 p.m.

With more than 40 works, the exhibition at Nohra Haime Gallery will survey Straus's oeuvre from 1979 to 2016. While the focus will be on paintings and works on paper, Straus's little-known photography and sculpture from the early 1980s will provide context for his later transition to painting. A number of the works are from private collections and will be on public view for the first time. At Adelson Galleries, the exhibition will focus on 14 paintings on canvas and works on paper from 2011 to 2016, many of which, in a witty and irreverent manner, refer to how technology alters our view of nature. Straus's cinematic expanses are sometimes painted on jute, which provides a rough surface that softens the image and creates the look of a screen.

As Amei Wallach writes in the essay for the book, "Think of the sheer pigheaded guts it took for as serious and ambitious an artist as Adam Straus to become a landscape painter in the 1980s. A century had passed since Cézanne torqued his trees into astringent meditations on the nature of painting; decades since the Abstract Expressionists swallowed the genre whole. The tradition into which Straus dared to tread ... was sorely in need of reanimation. His disruptions in the years since have unsettled received assumptions as much through dark humor and bravura painting as through offering a reassessment of what it means to paint the beauty of nature in ugly times. It is important to him that his paintings are accessible... But that is only the first, skin-deep level, and it is animated by compound subterranean layers of passionate conviction, cosmic yearning, and comedy."

Among the highlights at Nohra Haime Gallery will be *McStop*, 1993, in which a tiny depiction of the golden arches of McDonald's dots an otherwise pristine evening setting. The painting was inspired by a view on a cross-country road trip in the American Midwest.

A 2000 painting framed in lead, *A Line Drawn in the Sand*, depicts a vast desert stretching out to a blue sky with a line scratched in the middle. As Straus writes in the book, "It was inspired by the bellicose comments by so many of the politicians in the '90s about the Middle East...They would say 'We really have to draw a line in the sand,' as if that really was a strategy." Painted the same year, *Toxic Run-Off: The Calm Before the Storm* was inspired by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century American Luminist and Hudson River School painters such as John Kensett and William Trost Richards. Framed in lead with the paint dripping out of the picture, the peaceful seascape is both alluring and disturbing.

*Summit: Melting*, 2001, joins two wood panels together horizontally. The top panel is covered in canvas, the bottom in sheet lead. Straus notes in the book, "The image of the snow-covered mountain is painted on the top panel with the white paint of the snow allowed to drip over the bottom lead-covered panel...the drip is used to suggest something outside the aesthetic of the drip – in this case the melting of snow. I had read an article, at the time, about how the melting caused by climate change was decreasing the height of Mount Everest. There had also been numerous reports of the glaciers in the Andes melting at a much faster rate than usual."

The Instagram-inspired *Shared Air*, 2014, painted on rough jute, combines elements of seascape, air, and water with the symbols, words, and designs familiar to social media users. As Straus explains in the book, “I was interested in the garbage-can delete symbol, the back arrow, and the words ‘share’ and ‘save’ in terms of looking at our environment. The air and water that China and the United States pollute is shared all over the planet.”

In mid-2016, Straus began working on a series of paintings entitled *Glitch*, which will be on view at Adelson Galleries. Using an app that “glitches” up a photograph of one of his paintings, Straus would repaint a scene with abstract imagery based on the patterns created by the Glitch app. His subject matter, cold and remote regions of the world including icebergs in Antarctica, is inaccessible to most people, and therefore there are few eyewitnesses to the devastation caused by climate change.

### **Book**

A new monograph on the work of Adam Straus will be published by Gli Ori, Italy, in November 2016. The book will include text by Adam Straus, edited with an essay by Amei Wallach, the award-winning filmmaker, art critic, journalist, and curator. Straus writes about childhood experiences, fascinating moments with collectors (one revealed that President George W. Bush shed a tear in front of one of Straus’s painting about 9/11) and how a move to the North Fork of Long Island from Brooklyn in 2003 inspired many of his works.

### **About Adam Straus**

Work by Adam Straus is in numerous museum collections including the Parrish Art Museum, Bridgehampton, NY; List Visual Center, M.I.T., Cambridge, MA; Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH; The Art Museum at F.I.U., Miami, FL; Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA; Tufts University Art Gallery, Somerville, MA; and the William College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA, among others. Born in Miami in 1956, Straus lives and works in Riverhead, NY.

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### **Press Contact:**

Nicole Straus Public Relations

Nicole Straus, 631-369-2188, 917-744-1040, [nicole@nicolestrausspr.com](mailto:nicole@nicolestrausspr.com)

Margery Newman, 212-475-0252, [MargeryNewman@aol.com](mailto:MargeryNewman@aol.com)