FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Evan Penny
9 January – 14 February 2009

Sperone Westwater is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculpture by Evan Penny. This is the artist’s second solo show at the gallery.

For this exhibition of ten new works, Penny has expanded his practice of creating “altered” renderings of the human figure from silicone, pigment, hair and aluminum. With the exception of Large Murray (2008), the artist’s first free-standing sculpture in many years, Penny’s preferred format continues to be the classic portrait bust, transformed by enlarging, stretching and skewing the subject’s features. Penny’s focus has been to push the boundaries of representation by creating hyperreal sculptures which are neither fully three dimensional nor two dimensional.

In several of the new works on view, Penny develops his technique even further to incorporate elements of time-based photography and three-dimensional pictorial organization. In Panagiota: Conversation #1, Variation 2 (2008) and Panagiota: Conversation #2, Variation 1 (2008), Penny has created a portrait from in-motion photographs that were taken of his friend Panagiota speaking. For the first time, he has introduced time and motion as formal considerations in his work. The result is that we see the subject as she moves through time – specifically as she converses with Penny. In Self, variation #1 (2008), the distortion of the self portrait does not derive from frontal, two-dimensional pictorial references such as forced perspective, anamorphism, stretching or alteration. Instead, the geometry of the piece is based on a three-dimensional rhomboid, where all 6 sides of a cube are pulled and skewed. In the end, there is no single view in which Self, variation #1 (2008) fully resolves into an undistorted, naturalistically proportioned image.

As a young artist in Calgary, Alberta, Penny asked himself,

“How do you do figurative sculpture and make it relevant and contemporary when the terms are shifting constantly?”

In these eleven new works, Penny succeeds in generating a contemporary approach to figuration with a sculptural practice set within the context of modern photography, computer technology and virtual space.

Born in South Africa in 1953, Penny currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada. Since his first solo exhibition in 1981, Penny’s work has been exhibited throughout Canada and abroad. A major survey of the artist’s work, “Absolutely Unreal,” traveled to several different venues in Canada during 2004 and 2005, including the Museum London in London, Ontario, the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta. Most recently, “Evan Penny”, was organized by the Columbus Museum of Art, in Columbus, Ohio and traveled to the Flint Institute of Arts in Flint, Michigan (2007). Penny’s work is included in numerous public collections including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto, the Flint Institute of Arts, and the Columbus Museum of Art.

There will be an opening reception, with the artist in attendance, on 9 January from 6-8 pm. A catalogue with full color reproductions and an essay by Kenneth Silver, Professor of Modern Art at New York University, will accompany the exhibition.

For more information as well as images, please contact Maryse Brand at Sperone Westwater at (212) 999-7337, or maryse@speronewestwater.com. Also, please find further documentation on our website: www.speronewestwater.com.