

## EXHIBITION PRESS RELEASE

### *Jack Whitten*

On view May 24 - October 15, 2007

[Click here to read the P.S.1 Newspaper article about this exhibition.](#)

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center is pleased to present a solo exhibition of paintings by Jack Whitten. This show prominently features his large-scale 2005 painting *9.11.01* that was made in response to the September 11th tragedy, as well as the *Martin Luther King* series that the artist made in the 1960s. Together, these bodies of work capture the emotional fervor of two defining moments in American history. *Jack Whitten* is on view in the Painting Gallery from May 24 through October 15, 2007.

Riffing on the motto, "blood, money, and oil," *9.11.01* utilizes the pyramid from the U.S. dollar bill as its primary compositional element and incorporates a wide range of found symbolic imagery made from plaster molds and cast in acrylic paint to construct a collage. Measuring 10 feet high and 20 feet long, this mural-size painting nimbly balances abstraction and representation. The black triangular geometry can be read as a dark ziggurat, a monolithic form covered by smoke and fire.

Similarly, Whitten's series of paintings inspired by the life and death of Martin Luther King, Jr., blend elements of abstract expressionism and figuration. While the works are inspired by Willem de Kooning's "Woman" series from the 1950s, they also take into account the turmoil of the time - the atmosphere of struggle and protest of the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War, as well as the four political assassinations of Dr. King, John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Malcolm X.

Jack Whitten (b. 1939, Bessemer, Alabama) has been exhibiting his work for over 40 years. He has had a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1974) and a ten-year retrospective at the Studio Museum in Harlem (1983). Recently his work has been featured in the group shows *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967-1975* and *Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction 1964-1980*. Whitten lives and works in New York and Greece.

The exhibition is organized by P.S.1 Curatorial Advisor Phong Bui.



Jack Whitten, *9.11.01*, 2005, Mixed media and acrylic on canvas, 120 x 240", Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York, NY



WPS1 and P.S.1 have partnered with Time Out New York to bring you exclusive audio tracks to accompany exhibitions on view at P.S. 1. - [Learn more!](#)