

## “Beach Life” by Eric Fischl Opens at Guild Hall

August 9, 2012

by Pat Rogers

**DISPATCH - AUG 9, 2012 (2:07 p.m.)**

### **EAST HAMPTON, NY**

A major solo show by Eric Fischl opens on Saturday at Guild Hall Museum. “Beach Life” presents 15 paintings depicting life unfolding on the beaches of the Hamptons, St. Tropez and St. Barts. The show includes works loaned from the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and private collectors. Two paintings have never been exhibited before. All of the works are figurative.

“Forget about bathing beauties,” writes the novelist A.M. Holmes in the forward of the book *Beach Paintings* published by Rizzoli. “The beachgoers in Eric Fischl’s paintings are real people caught with their guard down—often their bathing suits too—as they wade and wallow at surf’s edge or lounge on the sand, sunlight slathering their naked thighs and shoulders.”



“Beautiful Day” by Eric Fischl, 2006. Oil on linen, 53 x 78 inches. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Zeckendorf.

The works in “Beach Life” were painted from 1983 to 2010. Works range in size from 3 x 4 feet to panels that stretch to over 13 feet. The people populating his painting are sometimes friends and family.

For instance, Fischl’s wife—the painter April Gornik—stands prominently in a polka dot bathing suit in “The Gang.” Artists Bryan Hunt, David Salle and Ralph Gibson are included in the painting inspired by group photographs made by Hans Namuth of Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and other artists gathered on a sand dune, according to Phyllis Tuchman, who wrote the essay for the exhibition.



“The Gang” by Eric Fischl, 2006. Oil on linen, 84 x 108 inches. Collection of Eric Fischl.

Beach scenes have been Fischl’s muse for over three decades, writes Tuchman in her essay *Beach Baby Blue*.

“Some of Fischl’s earliest beach scenes are extensions of the narrative panels that secured his

reputation in the early nineteen eighties," she writes. "Others have only a figure or two, their poses based on photographs the artist took on the French Riviera decades ago. A few are outright portraits. Many are virtuoso displays of light and shadow with slashing brushstrokes that animate the surf as well as hair blowing in the breeze."



"The Raft" by Eric Fischl, 2007. Oil on linen, 52 x 60 inches. Courtesy of Frieda and Roy Furman.

While the setting is casual and the figures relaxed, the paintings are steeped with psychological undertones and narrative intrigue.

Tuchman sums it up this way:

*"In the beach paintings on view at Guild Hall, Fischl has conveyed how men and women enjoying sand and surf, in his words, 'drop their guard.' He has imbued his figures with the 'hedonistic, the erotic, the playful' in a way that has allowed the artist to address 'a metaphor of desire and fantasy.'"*

Here is a sneak peek at a few paintings exhibited in "Beach Life":



“Costa del Sol” by Eric Fischl, 1986. Oil on linen, two panels, 96 x 1/4 x 156 1/2 inches. Collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Gift of Douglas S. Cramer Foundation.



“Four Women” by Eric Fischl, 2010. Oil on linen, 80 x 112 inches. Collection of Terry Semel.



“Untitled” by Eric Fischl, 2010. Oil on linen, 48 x 32 inches.

**BASIC INFO: “Beach Life”** – A solo show of paintings by **Eric Fischl** opens on Aug 11 and runs through Oct 14, 2012 at Guild Hall Museum. The exhibition presents 15 paintings made from 1983 to 2010. Also on view is the photography portfolio **“America: Now + Here.”** The project was conceived and spearheaded by Fischl.

A Gala Preview will be held on Aug 10 from 6 to 7 p.m. For tickets and information, email [ckaller@guildhall.org](mailto:ckaller@guildhall.org). The opening reception will be held on Aug 11 from 4 to 6 p.m. An illustrated lecture will be presented by Eric Fischl on Wednesday, Aug 15, at 8 p.m. in the John Drew Theater at Guild Hall.

**Guild Hall** is located at 158 Main St., East Hampton, NY. [www.guildhall.org](http://www.guildhall.org).

Information and additional art by **Eric Fischl** can be found at [www.ericfischl.com](http://www.ericfischl.com).

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