

PRESS RELEASE: 16 May 2005

**ROLLO Contemporary Art, Islington to launch with exhibition of recent work by Giancarlo Neri and installation of *The Writer* on Hampstead Heath**

Iron sculptures and photographs of *The Writer* by Giancarlo Neri will be on view at **ROLLO Contemporary Art** from 22 June - 27 July 2005, to coincide with the inauguration of Neri's monumental table and chair at Parliament Hill Fields and to mark the official opening of the new gallery space at 17 Compton Terrace, London, N1. After two years at Villa Ada in Rome, *The Writer* is finally coming to the location for which it was originally conceived: Hampstead Heath, a location famed for its literary traditions. The Italian artist recalls, *'When I found out about the Heath's long association with writers, I read it as a sign of destiny'*. Indeed, the work is aptly described by the artist as *'a monument to the loneliness of the writer'* and challenges the notion of the writer's inherently private work place by installing it in the most public of contexts.

Neri's intense awareness of the setting of his works is enhanced by the intimacy of the gallery space at ROLLO for which this new series of works was made. The sculptures, ranging from 30 cm to 200 cm in height, mark the culmination of the artist's work in a disused steel plant in Naples during which Neri dismantled and reshaped pieces of iron to create entirely new forms. Through a process of recycling, Neri invests his sculptures with new meaning offering at times a subtle and witty critique, as demonstrated in *Social Climbing* and *Talk About Art*. By exploiting the raw qualities of the material, Neri both enhances the industrial form of the sculptures and plays on their domestic connotations. The inherent contradiction in using industrial forms as domestic objects challenges the viewer's preconceptions and confounds their sense of order. The exhibition as a whole reveals the vital role of chairs in Neri's work, echoing the monumentality of *The Writer*, and hinting at a lack of human presence. The work offers no clear explanation and remains in keeping with his larger scale installations. Neri wants his audience to ask questions:

*'Eighty percent of the people who see my installations happen to see them by chance, without knowing what they are, who did them or what they mean. There is no label, no fact sheet, no artist's statement, no instructions. I love that. The challenge for me is to make these people, young, old, men, women, stop and wonder: what is this? Why is it here? Who did this?'*

Born in Naples in 1955, Giancarlo Neri moved to New York in 1978 to play professional football. After studying painting and sculpture at the *Art Students League* in America it was there that his artistic career began, with large-scale installations such as *Esame Finestra* (1982) in Union Square and *Still Night* (1989) on the rooftop of the Clocktower Gallery (PS1) in Manhattan. Since then, Neri has done projects in Washington, *A Monument to Bureaucracy* (1990), in Brazil *Ouro* (2000) at the Museu da Republica in Rio de Janeiro, and many in Italy; some of which include *OTTO* (2004) at the Studio Angeletti in Rome, *Napoli da Lontano* (2002) at the Fondazione Carlo Rendano in Naples, and *La Fabbrica a Palazzo* (2000) at the Royal Palace in Naples.

**Simon Gillespie**, Director of ROLLO states, 'I am delighted to be representing Giancarlo in the United Kingdom and I am particularly pleased that *The Writer* will be in the location for which it was originally intended, to be enjoyed by so many.'

The installation and exhibition have been organised by **ROLLO Contemporary Art** in conjunction with the **Italian Cultural Institute** in London and made possible by **UNICREDIT, DARC, ROTTAPHARM** and **Incontri Internazionali d'Arte**, the Italian sponsors of *The Writer*.

**ROLLO Contemporary Art opening hours: 10am- 6pm Tuesdays to Saturdays (closed Sundays and Mondays), or by appointment.**

**For further press information on ROLLO Contemporary Art, the installation of *The Writer* and associated events and images, please contact:**

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