

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stephen Torton

...too soft for anyone I know

November 19th to January 14th, 2006

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 19th 6:00 to 9:00 PM

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present *...too soft for anyone I know*, a photo and video portrait by **Stephen Torton** of international art star Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through photographs and video, Torton creates an intimate look at Basquiat during the early years of his intense, prolific ten-year career, which ended with Basquiat's tragic death in 1988 at age 27.

Torton documented Basquiat's world in photographs and video while working as his assistant in the early Eighties. *...too soft for anyone I know* enters on three settings in Basquiat's life: a trip to Los Angeles with Rammellzee (an important, early graffiti artist and hip hop pioneer), including images quickly taken by Torton of a cartoon character statue as Basquiat ordered him to "get it, get it, get it" (and which would later become source material for paintings); in his New York loft as he poses with his then girlfriend, now pop icon, Madonna and works on the seminal painting *In Italian* (1982); and the final setting in the seemingly unlikely forests surrounding Appenzell, Switzerland with the important gallerist Bruno Bischofberger.

Deborah Colton says of the exhibition, "The title comes from a moment one evening when someone came behind Stephen and gently placed their hands over his eyes. Stephen couldn't figure out who it was and said, 'Too soft for anyone I know.' turned around, and it was Basquiat. This exhibition is a celebration of his life and the soft, gentle relationship between Torton and Basquiat."

The video showing during the exhibition was shot by Torton as Basquiat worked on several paintings. The rough, unedited footage documents the artist as he contemplates the beginning of a painting and his alterations as it progresses toward finality. Torton will use the video in a forthcoming film about Basquiat he is producing with filmmaker Yolande Zauberman.

Torton will lead a gallery talk on *...too soft for anyone I know* on Saturday, December 17, 2005, at 2 PM.

Stephen Torton was born in Brooklyn, New York. His work has been exhibited in New York, Paris, Geneva, Berlin, Stuttgart, and Havana. His photographs of Basquiat have been extensively published and collected worldwide. Torton has also worked on such films as *Stranger in Paradise* by Jim Jannusch and the pilot episodes of *Fishing with John* featuring musician John Lurie.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography and conceptual future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.