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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jess

(1923-2004)

Paintings and Paste-Ups

May 22 – July 31, 2008

The Tibor de Nagy Gallery is pleased to present its first exhibition of works by the celebrated painter and collage artist Jess (Collins), a leading light of the San Francisco art scene from the 1950s until his death in 2004, and one of the most original artists of the second half of the 20th century.

The exhibition will include a selection of paintings and collages dating from 1952 to 1993. The exhibition is the first in New York since the comprehensive Jess retrospective “A Grand Collage,” was presented at the Whitney Museum in 1994, and the first gallery exhibition in New York in over twenty years.

The artist is best known for his paste-ups, translations and salvages. His paste-ups are complicated surrealist collages assembled using magazines, photographs, and any other material at hand. The translations, which comprise thirty-two paintings completed over thirty years, borrow images from a range of sources, including scientific illustrations, childhood photographs, and postcards. He used the terms salvages for those works he created on paintings he found at thrift stores, or unfinished canvases of his own.

Included in the exhibition will be some of his most significant works, drawn from museums and private collections. Among the works, will be two of Jess’s largest, most complex paste-ups *The Unentitled Graces*, 1978, (Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery), and *A Cryogenic Consideration; Or, Sounding One Horn Of The Dilemma (Winter)*, 1980 (private collection), and five of Jess’s translations, all oil on wood or canvas, the largest measuring 28 x 18 inches.

Born Burgess Collins in Long Beach, California, he initially studied Chemistry at the California Institute of Technology and spent three years in the army at the Atomic Energy Laboratory, where he had a small part in the Manhattan Project to develop the first atom bomb. While working at an atomic energy project, he became disillusioned with science after having a nightmare about the world destroying itself, and instead turned to art.

Jess studied painting at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute). His teachers included some of the most influential West coast painters of the period, including David Park, Elmer Bischoff, and Clyfford Still. During this time, Jess met poet Robert Duncan, who would become his lifelong partner, and frequent collaborator. They were an influential force in the San Francisco artistic community, bringing together painters and poets, organizing exhibitions and readings.

Jess's work became known to a broader public after his work was included in a number of influential museum exhibitions including in 1961 "The Art of Assemblage" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, "Pop Art U.S.A." at the Oakland Art Museum in 1963, and "American Collages," a traveling exhibition that was organized and presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 1965.

His work was featured in a number of prestigious museum group exhibitions throughout the 1960s and 1980s, including exhibitions at The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The Whitney Museum of American Art. In 1993-1994 a comprehensive survey of the artist's work traveled to the Albright Knox Art Gallery, Walker Art Center, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Whitney.

The Tibor de Nagy Gallery is the exclusive representative of the Jess Estate.

An exhibition catalogue with an essay by Peter Selz is available.

For further information and visuals please contact Meghan Jewett at 212.262.5050.