



SAN FRANCISCO (March 12, 2007) -- Serge Sorokko Gallery announced today that it will host the U.S. premiere of controversial British artist Damien Hirst's most recent multi-media work, *New Religion*. This extraordinary and provocative installation, which explores the relationship between science and faith, marks the highly acclaimed artist's first one-man show in the Bay Area. Damien Hirst's *New Religion* will open to the public on March 29 and remain at Serge Sorokko Gallery through May 20, 2007. (A private reception will be held on March 28 from 6pm to 8pm.)

The Serge Sorokko Gallery is located at 231 Grant Avenue in San Francisco and can be visited on the Web at www.sorokko.com. Gallery hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Telephone: 415 421-7770.

"I am thrilled to bring this important collection of Damien Hirst's work to San Francisco," said gallery owner Serge Sorokko. "This exhibition represents a rare opportunity for people in the Bay Area to view Damien Hirst's most recent creation, although, as with all of Hirst's exhibitions, we anticipate nationwide interest in this latest collection."

Damien Hirst is best known for his *Natural History* series, in which dead animals, including a shark, a sheep and a cow, are presented preserved, sometimes dissected, in formaldehyde. The sale of his iconic work "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living," a 14-foot tiger shark in formaldehyde in a vitrine, catapulted Hirst to the number two spot among living artists, second only to Jasper Johns, for the price paid for a single work of art.

The *New Religion* collection focuses on the conflict between science and faith. Damien Hirst has said, "People tend to think of them as two very separate things, one cold and clinical, the other emotional, warm and loving. I wanted to leap over those boundaries and give you something that looks clinical and cold, but has all the religious, metaphysical connotations, too."

The *New Religion* installation comprises more than 40 silkscreens on Somerset satin, as well as works on canvas, objects and sculptures. The works take the viewer full circle from the Creation of the World, through the Stations of the Cross, and to the Last Judgment. An altar piece holds a cedar cross studded with gem-like pills, a child's skull cast in sterling silver, a heart wrapped in barbed wire and pierced by needles and razor blades, also cast in silver, and a large carved marble pill -- the Eucharist.

Stories of miracles and prophecies are presented through the diverse properties of medicines, becoming the names of the drugs that are supposed to cure us. Printed on different backgrounds -- silver, a congealed blood red and a bright sunny sky -- the rational order of miraculous medicines seems by turns horrific, precious, gem-like and ethereal. Belief, the artist tells us, whether in religion, art or science, is a means of forming a buffer against the fragility and temporary nature of life and provides a means of living in the shadow of death, from which it can ultimately offer no actual escape.