

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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KATHRYN SPENCE

Objects and Drawings

Exhibition dates: May 3-June 10, 2006

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, May 4, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Objects and Drawings*, an exhibition of new work by San Francisco based artist Kathryn Spence. Installations of sculptural objects and unconventional drawings explore the disparity between the culture of the artificial and the existence of the untamed natural world that surrounds us.

Birds have long been prominent in Spence's work for their agility in traversing the natural realm and the urban environment. In this exhibition Spence follows from her well-known renderings of pigeons and other urban birds made of street trash by creating object representations of various species of owls. Spence piles and layers scrap fabrics from clothing and makes use of patterned material from disassembled furry plush toys to approximate the distinctive features of five species of owls that she has observed in nature and one species that remains elusive. Commonly unseen by man in its natural habitat, the owl is an embodiment of the Hidden Wild, and these works are installed in the artificial habitat of the gallery to suggest the respective species' behavior and existence in their natural environment. The meaningful act of bringing these objects inside to stand in honor of the real creature lends an unsettling sense of consciousness to these accumulations, reminding us of human disassociation with the natural world.

Additional works in the exhibition include a number of peculiar and amorphous sculptural objects made of fabric and other found materials paired with meticulously rendered drawings in colored pencil of the objects themselves. Spence has described the objects she makes as dimensional drawings. These object/drawing reiterations authenticate one another, and together in conversation with the two-dimensional drawing the object is made "official". A large-scale sculptural work created from cardboard boxes containing meticulously stacked and organized accumulations of a variety of odd and humble objects and materials including pillow tags, cell phone advertisements, thread, bobby pins, Styrofoam, string and cotton batting is a monument to the impulse to organize, a theme that continues throughout the exhibition.

KATHRYN SPENCE received a BFA from the University of Colorado, Boulder and an MFA from Mills College, Oakland, CA. Her work is represented in numerous museum collections including SFMOMA, the de Young Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, and the San Jose Museum of Art. Last year Spence was selected for the 48th Corcoran Biennial exhibition and solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at the Kemper Museum, Kansas City, MO, and the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Spence was a recipient of the Anonymous Was A Woman foundation grant in 2005.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879, Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com.