

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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KATHRYN SPENCE

Cloudless White

Exhibition dates: June 11-August 22, 2009

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, June 11, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Cloudless White*, an exhibition of new work by Kathryn Spence.

Spence creates objects and drawings that bear uncanny references to the natural world. Deeply rooted in her experiences as an avid birder, gardener, and conservationist, Spence creates installations that attempt to order and arrange both recognizable and unrecognizable forms as metaphors for psychological spaces. Constructed from manufactured materials unwanted and discarded—scraps, thread, and fabric from worn-out clothing—Spence's objects emulate the living animals and other items and elements she observes in nature, and explore the disparity between the culture of the artificial and the existence of the untamed natural world that surrounds us.

This exhibition presents complex arrangements informed by nature, re-imagined and adapted for an inside space, bringing into sharp focus elements that may be hidden or overlooked in the real world. Spence's man-made materials are meticulously gathered, cut up into pieces, loosely arranged, piled, and bound with string, transforming them into objects that bear a clear and striking resemblance to living species of bird, animal, or plant life. Owls, woodpeckers, and butterflies are accompanied by objects of indeterminate form, all comingling in a loose system of mutual support.

While this imitation of the real may seem an inadequate substitute for the real itself, in Spence's world it is accepted that this is the deeper meaning—viewing the real through a transformative lens, so that specific structures that exist in nature without fanfare or drama are isolated, drawing them out in ways revelatory and unexpected. In her butterfly pieces, creatures of incredible fragility and fleeting transience are rendered from print media scraps, highlighting the tension between human development and the natural world.

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, and the Birmingham Museum of Art, among others. In 2008, Spence was awarded the The Fleishhacker Foundation Fellowship, and in 2005, received the Anonymous Was A Woman foundation award. Spence was selected for the 48th Corcoran Biennial exhibition in 2005. 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. Upcoming solo museum exhibitions are scheduled at Mills College, Oakland, CA and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT.

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.