

Stephen Friedman Gallery
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PRESS RELEASE

Robert Beck
10 June – 22 July 2006
Preview Friday 9 June 2006 6 – 8 pm

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present their first exhibition of new works by American artist ROBERT BECK.

Robert Beck creates encounters between objects and viewers. His work is poetic, engaging, visceral, and sometimes violent. In his exhibition at Stephen Friedman Gallery, Beck deploys a diverse range of media, including offset printing blankets, a plaster-cast brick-and-mortar wall sculpture, a cast-aluminium exhibition display apparatus that presents an array of disparate artefacts, and drawings that incorporate forensic latent fingerprint powder. Throughout, personal and cultural narratives are collapsed.

In *Bars and Stars* ("The Daily Mirror", May 1, 2004), a variety of gray printing blankets, which drape along the gallery walls and floors, are screen-printed repeatedly with images from a tabloid newspaper and studded with anodized aluminium stars. The images amplify staged photographs of British soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners, echoing images of U.S. atrocities at Abu Graib. Here the media itself, in fabricating gruesome events to capitalize on the barbarism of warfare, becomes the true sensation, with multifarious and contradictory implications.

While Beck uses a poetic title to trip layers of association and insinuate meaning in *Torn Animals Were Removed at Sunset from That Smile (Strike)*, the punning title *Brick and Bracket* contradicts the haunting true crime reproduction it frames. Linguistics via psychology is explicit in the canvas *Chain of Association (Head)*, in which screen-printed tables from the Kent-Rosanoff Free Association Test – the original 1905 word association test – are superimposed with a pigment print of skeins of enlarged nickel-plated chains.

In *You're In All Parts, Titian (Stalled)*, the latest iteration in a series of graffiti-based works, a men's room stainless steel stall partition is etched in a lace pattern by a CNC machine. By turns reflective or dark, the engraved gossamer pattern on the industrial manufactured panel is a provocative amalgamation. Beck also exhibits dense drawings done after those found in personality assessment tests and psychological case studies. Incorporating previous drawings, and using latent fingerprint powder, a palimpsest of often poignant or troubled psychologies can be glimpsed.

Recent solo exhibitions by Robert Beck include Opalka Gallery, Sage College, Albany, NY in 2006; Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA in 2005; CRG Gallery, NY and Art Basel Miami, The Design District, Miami, FL in 2004; Group exhibitions include *ARMED – Contemporary Art and Violence*, Madeville Gallery, Union College, Schenectady, NY in 2006; *MULTIPLEX 2*, Smack Mellon, NY; *Past Presence: Childhood and Memory*, Whitney Museum at Altria, NY and *Monuments for the USA*, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA in 2005.

Stephen Friedman Gallery will be participating in Art Basel, Hall 2.1, Stand D10 from 13-18 June 2006. The Gallery will be closed to the public in August and will reopen at the beginning of September 2006.

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm and Saturday 11am-5pm

For further details please contact Hanne Tonger-Erk on =44 20 7494 1434