

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Jeffry Mitchell

“Watercolors and Ceramic Sculpture”

October 14 – November 27, 2004

Reception: Thursday, Oct. 14 6:00-8:00PM

James Harris Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Jeffry Mitchell. The artist challenges the formal opposition between two and three dimensional art forms with whimsy and originality. The show will consist of drawings and ceramic sculpture investigating the subject of flowers, a subject that has recurred in the artist's work over the past fifteen years. Mitchell first used the flower as image when he lived in Japan, where the relationship of flowers and ceramics is fundamental. In today's high tech world, Jeffry Mitchell is an artist with a personal touch. His watercolors and sculptures have a knowing naiveté. As a master of duality, he melds childhood innocence with arch sophistication.

Mitchell's trademark pen, ink and watercolor drawings are meticulously constructed through the use of cross hatching, cartooning and delicate arabesques. Flowers have been used as metaphors or signifiers throughout the history of art. In this exhibition, peonies are Mitchell's central subjects of the works on paper. The flowers and their leaves are imbued with a feeling of latent sexuality. Through their simple beauty they reflect on emotional and psychological needs or desires. These images of cut flowers also carry with them a suggestion of mortality. Carefully crafted to represent ideas and evoke experiences common to a broad audience, the drawings are delicate and sweet yet never cloying.

In the center of the gallery will be a large table on which functional objects such as vases will be combined with elaborate ceramic constructions of flowers. The vessels operate as intercessors to preserve or at least extend the lives of the cut flowers. These homespun Baroque objects flourish with blooms, buds and leaves. The abundance of repeated forms harkens back to a functional device used by Mitchell in previous work. By carefully handcrafting multiple forms, the artist not only questions ideas of production, taking aim at remembrances of grandmother's cherished figurines, but also investigates the power of duplicity to emphasize formal constructs of art making.



Peony, Peony, Begonia, Peony, 2004
Suite of 4 drawings
Watercolor and carbon on paper
each 26" x 20 1/4"

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday 11:00 to 5:00 and by appointment. Photography is available upon request.