

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Mark Mumford
Photographs and Sculpture
July 22 through August 21, 2004
Reception: Thursday, August 5, 6-8PM
Gallery Hours: Wednesday through Saturday 11AM to 5PM and by appointment.

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of photographs and sculpture by Seattle artist, Mark Mumford. The artist continues his investigation of words and phrases often found in everyday speech. He sees these works as a convergence of surrealism, pop, and conceptualism. For this exhibition, Mumford photographed signs or placards on different styles of chairs. Short phrases are graphically laid out on a white ground, and then placed on chairs, the sculptures are then photographed. For example, the text “Very Nearly Empty” sits on an office chair, its back hidden by the sign but clearly visible are its seat and black casters. A physicality is invoked through the combination of elements of speech and the object. Though austere, the photographs reference an intensely human experience not only in language but also the physical relationship of the body to the chair as an object.



Mumford photographs act as doubles to explore multiple themes. Manipulation and suggestion through linguistic referencing, the language of control, the challenge to accept the modes of authorship and the presentation of advertisement in contemporary culture are all present. The work is the product of sensibility but appears circumscribed by the artificial and the mechanical. His photographic prints communicate a distinct sense of humanness but adhere to the “cool” of the commercial or manufactured. Mumford’s work conflates the meaning of written messages by critiquing how believable they are. Each pictorial suggestion becomes a shifting ground of meaning while demonstrating the ever-present power of language.

Mark Mumford’s work is also currently on view in the exhibition “Baja to Vancouver” at the Vancouver Art Gallery in Vancouver B.C. Photography is available upon request.