Murray Guy
453 West 17 Street New York NY 10011 T: 212 463 7372 F: 212 463 7319 info@murrayguy.com



Moyra Davey
My Necropolis
7 November – 24 December 2009
Opening reception 7 November 6-8pm

Murray Guy is delighted to announce our first exhibition with Moyra Davey, which will also be her first solo exhibition in New York since 2003. This show will include a survey of works spanning nearly twenty years of Davey's practice, as well a new series of photographs and a new film.

Over the past two decades, Davey has built an extraordinary body of work comprised of photographs, writings, and video. As opposed to a current predilection for large-scale, digitally manipulated photographs, her seemingly modest works reclaim a practice of photography grown out of contingency and accident. At stake is not just a series of discrete works, but rather an entire practice of engagement with the world, a reflection on possibilities of producing and consuming, and on the psychic lives of objects. Her practice of close looking reflects something like Virginia Woolf's observation that the most satisfying kind of reading is that done with "pen & notebook" (or camera) in hand.

The earliest work included in this show will be Davey's *Copperheads*, a series of one hundred close-up photographs of pennies. Executed in 1990 after the stock market collapse, these astounding images of Lincoln's scratched and worn visage reflect on money, value and circulation. Also on view will be Davey's series of *Newsstand* photographs (1994), and *Bottle Grid* (1996-2000), comprised of 54 images of empty whiskey bottles, each photographed in the location where it had attained "a state of depletion." Various other photographs (1996-2007) show books, records, VHS tapes, and the rich interior of Davey's apartment; in Helen Molesworth's words, "a body of work in a minor key, a series of images of things simultaneously in the world and at the edge of it."

A new film, *My Necropolis*, pairs footage of cemeteries with attempts at interpreting an enigmatic line from a letter that Walter Benjamin wrote to his friend Gershom Scholem in 1931. Benjamin, living in very difficult financial circumstances, mentions a clock outside his window which increasingly becomes a luxury that "it is difficult to do without." Alongside the film are a number of new photographs taken over the past year while Davey was on a residency at the Cité des Arts in Paris. Mailed to friends in New York and unfolded on the gallery walls, these photographs trace the passage of time, showing graves and tombstones, clocks, coffee cups, maps, tabletops, and interiors. As Miwon Kwon writes: "Davey's works remind us of 'slow time,' the cyclical and durational experience of our daily existence that is the site of magic and drudgery, identity and history. . . not the truth of reality but what is true of a life lived attentively."

Moyra Davey (b. 1958) lives and works in New York. She was recently the subject of an expansive survey at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. Coinciding with this exhibition, Yale University Press published a monograph of her photographs and writing, *Long Life Cool White*, which is available from the gallery. In New York, she exhibited with Colin de Land's gallery American Fine Arts in 2003, 1999, 1996, and 1994, and from 2005-2008, she was a partner in the collaborative gallery Orchard. Recent group exhibitions include *Photography on Photography: Reflections on the Medium since 1960* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2008); and *Calender of flowers, gin bottles, steak bones* (with James Welling and Claire Pentecost), Orchard, New York (2007). Other books by Moyra Davey include *The Problem of Reading* (Documents Books, 2003), and *Mother Reader: Essential Writings on Motherhood* (Seven Stories Press, 2001.)

With many thanks to the Délégation générale du Québec for their support of this exhibition.