

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Frank Benson, May 26th to June 25th, 2005

Frank Benson is also featured in
Make it Now, at Sculpture Center, 44-19 Purves St., Long Island City, p.718.361.1750

Frank Benson's first solo exhibition is a presentation of sculpture that explores strange terrain. The three pieces at Taxter & Spengemann, in addition to *Flag* (2005) a public work located on top of the building at 259 10th avenue, navigate a surrealistic space between two and three dimensions and digital and analog production. The artist has relied heavily on the tools of Photoshop rather than those of the studio, to assist in the development of each piece. Physical tinkering was replaced by digital manipulation to arrive at an image of what his object would become. While the artworks were loosely derived from these digital models, they exhibit a remarkably hand-finished quality and impeccable craftsmanship. The found objects and replicas that Benson utilizes offer an element of familiarity, but this is undermined by the artist's skill at combining things in *unfamiliar* ways, leaving the viewer with a collection of pieces that are as compelling as they are beautifully aloof.

The subject of *Framework 1* and *2* (both 2005) is indigenous to the space in which the pieces are exhibited—Benson has adorned the walls of this contemporary gallery with its down-market analogue, the frame shop. Benson gathered frame samples and arranged them on a grid of raw wood (similar to that used as stretcher bars for a painting). The chevron shaped samples are arranged across the wooden lattice, at points overlapping and cutting into each other, making a play of rippling shapes that induces curious optical anomalies and glitches. The familiar results of lazy cutting and pasting—missing fragments, liquid distortion, and the digital jog of Photoshop image manipulation are evident in both of these pieces.

Benson's two-dimensional process is here rendered in real space, but in a low relief sculpture that hangs in a balance between flatness and three-dimensionality.

Swan Gourd (2005), true to its title, is derived from a swan-shaped gourd. Benson preserved the gourd in cast plastic, and meticulously painted its surface in oil paint to resemble a fresh vegetable. In an act of sculptural intervention the graceful neck of the gourd has been improbably altered, creating an effective disequilibrium that allows you to free associate the gourd with the frame sample that it sits on.

Swan Gourd invites a frontal viewing, as defined by the frame which supports it. When you walk around the sculpture, the unpainted, labeled back of the frame sample is revealed. Seeing "behind the scenes" disrupts the pictorial illusion, making you aware again of the gourd and the frames as such until you circle back to the front.

With *Flag*, Benson has again selected a found object, manipulated it, and returned it to its natural setting. Benson subtly distorted an American flag using a computer program that introduces "natural" weather forces to digitized images. He rendered the altered image in appliquéd Nylon fabric and now the 10 x 18 ft. *Flag* billows in the wind on top of the building at 259 10th avenue (between 25th and 26th streets).

Ironically, this artwork goes easily unnoticed in Chelsea, as it waits to grab the attention of the unwitting passerby.

Frank Benson graduated with an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2003. In 2004 he was awarded with a grant from the Rema Hort Mann Foundation. He has been chosen for *Make it Now: New Sculpture in New York* (May 15-July 31, 2005), at Sculpture Center. He has been included in group exhibitions at Regen Projects, Grant Selwyn, and the Happy Lion, (all in Los Angeles, CA.) Lombard Freid, and Artists Space (New York). In the fall of 2005 he will be featured in a group show of American sculptors at the Astrup Fearnely Museum in Oslo, Norway. This is Frank Benson's first solo exhibition.