

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**C****"The question is a compliment."**

May 22 - July 11, 2008

Opening reception: Thursday, May 22nd, 6 - 8 PM

No act is so private it does not seek applause.

-John Updike, *Couples*, 1968

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Matthew Brannon.

Matthew Brannon continues his consideration of the cosmopolitan condition with his exhibition "The question is a compliment." A series of new sculptures and letterpress prints use New York City's immediate surroundings as a backdrop to discuss more private pathologies.

Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician widely recognized as the father of modern medicine, once advised his students to avoid treating patients in the latter stages of consumption as their efforts would most assuredly be futile and reflect poorly on their abilities. We know now that tuberculosis was a bacterial scourge highly resistant to treatment, but it is interesting to note that the man considered responsible for medical ethics actually counseled his students that a dead body would be bad for business. In other words, public perception is everything.

Consumption plays a key role in the work of Matthew Brannon. Not of the particular tubercular variety, of course, but of the public, Keynesian kind: the kind that nudges us to want things... to retard our insecurities with trophies, career opportunities, sex and substances. Brannon's prints, referring to various consumerist topics such as shoe shopping and fine dining, mischievously turn on the double meaning of taste, both the discerning eye of aesthetics and the literal sensory taste buds of the tongue.

More ambivalent than cynical, Brannon's approach implicates everyone, including himself, and, most of all, the various and varied commercial media which dictate our desires. From high heels to spare change, Brannon's letterpress prints and silk-screens craftily play both sides: he employs mass production techniques to make unique works, uses images and methods that at once seem current yet strangely anachronistic (also mixing the quotidian with the luxury), and provides us with texts that complicate rather than illustrate. Each piece adding or divorcing itself from a larger humorous and often noir take on subjects as varied as they are irresolvable.

The gallery is divided into sections using handcrafted display rigs to hang his signature prints. Infused with a Freudian impulse, the prints encourage an irresolvable but productive tension between text and image. Images of high heels, sushi, sake, typewriters and adult dvds meet with texts on crime, art, sex, success, regret, guilt and shame. The show culminates with his sculpture *Rat*, a small shelf placed intentionally out of reach holds of twenty-five copies of his most recent novel of the same title. Denying our access to what we assume to be the shows skeleton key, leaving its content for a more private moment.

This will be Matthew Brannon's second exhibition with Friedrich Petzel Gallery. The exhibition will open on Thursday, May 22, with a reception from 6-8 p.m. and will be on view through July 11. Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 535 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011. For more information, please contact the gallery at 212-680-9467 or info@petzel.com.