

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

For Immediate Release:

Whiting Tennis

April 4 - May 10, 2008

Opening Reception: Friday, April 4, 6 - 8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present new work by Whiting Tennis.

Whiting Tennis' paintings, sculptures and drawings are guided by the fundamental aspects of building. Fusing basic elements of shelter, habitat, or furniture with other figurative or invented shapes, he creates compelling new hybrids that pose as anthropomorphic or animalistic totems. For example, *Boogeyman*, is an ominous, freestanding, outhouse-like structure comprised of plywood covered in shiny black tar. Ambiguous in both form and function, it serves as a relic of the past, like an old historic building that has outlived its usefulness to society, and is left to slowly deteriorate.

The forms defined in the freestanding sculptures are reiterated in Tennis' works on canvas where he combines painting, collage and wood block printing to simulate the surface texture and pattern of building materials. In this medium, however, objects and shapes are compressed and flattened like a theatrical backdrop, reducing the differences between positive and negative space, paint and collage. A color palette of muted grays and whites predominates, mimicking the weathered exterior of a neglected building.

Also on view will be a selection of smaller, wall-mounted sculptures that resemble everyday objects such as shelves or cabinets, but may contain unexpected details that defy practical use. Elements such as a latch that doesn't open, or a false door, give these works an enigmatic quality, as if they were ghosts of their utilitarian counterparts. Like the freestanding sculptures, they convey a spirit of nostalgia for the handmade objects of the past and serve as a meditation on the disposable nature of American culture.

Whiting Tennis lives and works in Seattle, Washington and has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States. As the 2007 recipient of the Neddy Artist Fellowship, his work was recently exhibited in the Tacoma Art Museum, and he will be featured in an upcoming exhibition for the finalists of the Contemporary Northwest Art Awards at the Portland Art Museum in June 2008. This will be his third solo exhibition with the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 615 West 27th Street, between 11th and 12th Avenues. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.