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LEE STOETZEL

You Are in a Landscape

APRIL 26 – MAY 26, 2007 • Opening Reception Thursday, April 26, 6 – 8 pm

Mixed Greens is thrilled to announce Lee Stoetzel's third solo show at the gallery. In this exhibition, he will present his newest sculptures.

In much of his work, Stoetzel photographs or sculpts natural elements to reveal hidden landscapes and monumental worlds within tiny, overlooked spaces. Each piece emphasizes the power of natural form and the temporary predicament of the man-made. In his new series, Stoetzel reinforces this theme by using natural elements as building materials for man-made forms.

Stoetzel grew up in Florida where aged cypress is used as paneling in seafood restaurants and motel lobbies to give an "authentic" Floridian appeal. "Pecky Cypress" is, in fact, fungus-eaten cypress wood with hollow spaces that appear to be carved marks. The wood's texture mimics camouflage, a Richter-like abstract painting, a woodblock print or pyrography. Stoetzel finds this natural design to be fascinating and, for this show, carves Pecky Cypress into both a VW Bus and a replica "Captain America" Harley Davidson Chopper motorcycle from the movie *Easy Rider*. Both are 1:1 decoys of the real vehicles. They inspire dialogue related to the landscape, a longing for the open road and nostalgia.

In a similar vein, Stoetzel covers an existing Suzuki motorcycle with assorted seashells. The shells are a break from the Pecky wood, yet they demonstrate the same reliance on gradual and measured ecological formation. Again, a lust for the open road dominates. The viewer is invited to imagine riding these vehicles into the landscape, where lines are blurred between what is natural and what is manufactured. As the viewer investigates the craftsmanship of each piece, a once-familiar object is transformed and rediscovered.

Finally, Stoetzel will show large mirrors, meticulously sculpted in shells and sand. Each replicates the bird's eye view (from *Google maps*) of a famous garden. Again, the tension between the natural and the man-made is palpable.

Lee Stoetzel has been featured in solo shows at Mixed Greens (2004, 2005) and Tricia Collins Contemporary Art, New York City (1996-1999). In 2006 he was part of the Katonah Museum show "I Love The 'Burbs" and in 2005, he was an integral part of the Islip Museum's "Design for Living." In 2004, he appeared at the Armory show with both Julie Saul Gallery and Kenny Schacter ConTEMPorary. Other group exhibition venues include Jessica Murray Projects, Brooklyn (2002), Meadows Museum, Dallas, TX (2000), Michigan Contemporary Art Center (2000), and Stalke Galleri, Copenhagen, Denmark (1999).