

Mireille Mosler, Ltd.

Wayne White
WAY TO GO MISTER SUBTLE

May 28 – July 24, 2009

For immediate release

Mireille Mosler, Ltd is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by the Los Angeles artist Wayne White. In this series of surrealist landscapes, twisting letters trample through idealistic, bucolic scenery to bring messages of biting sarcasm, emotional sincerity, and tender insight into American art and ethos.

Rather than a canvas, White paints on 1960s and 1970s thrift-store lithographic reproductions of 19th century Romantic landscape paintings, incorporating their kitsch iconography into the composition with both irony and national pride. Over the dusty, muted pallet of open vistas, torrent oceans, unpaved roads and domestic hearths, White employs traditional oil painting techniques to render three-dimensional phrases as if they were monolithic sculptures jutting from the terrain. His industrial bronze sculptures conjoin letters to form vertiginous totems that are playful and yet vaguely threatening. Inspired by his childhood in Tennessee, the phrases often strike an aggressive, irreverent, or vulgar tone on first reading, but can be interpreted to hold multiple meanings. Titles such as *The Dusty Shelves Of My Fucked Up Mind* become wistful and nostalgic whereas *ALABAMA MOFO*, displayed on a barn roof near over-sized tires develops into a cheeky pun on southern car culture.

Like Ed Ruscha before him, the language is given objecthood and achieves personification through a vernacular syntax. Sometimes the words are presented like scene-appropriate signage. Other times they correspond with the rest of the composition in color only, creating a visual onomatopoeia through psychedelic distortion. His treatment of words and material and the alteration of his ready-made backgrounds recall graffiti art, Dada assemblage, Rauschenberg's Combines, and concrete poetry of the 1960s.

The kitsch element of the cliché imagery is elevated by White's skillful craftsmanship and the complex ways in which the text interacts with the landscape. Spatial illusions abound with words receiving more formal attention than the appropriated backgrounds that they alternately contradict or articulate. In this manner, the American ideal meets the American neurosis, uniting language with imagery, scenery with the subconscious, and sincerity with the absurd.

Wayne White was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1957 and lives and works now in Los Angeles. He recently participated in the group show *LA Now* at the Las Vegas Art Museum. White is represented by Western Projects, Culver City, California. This exhibition is in conjunction with the release of *Wayne White: Maybe Now I'll Get the Respect I So Richly Deserve*, edited and designed by Todd Oldham and published by Ammo Books, LLC.

WAY TO GO MISTER SUBTLE will be on view at Mireille Mosler Ltd., 35 East 67th Street. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information, please contact the gallery at (212) 249-4195 or info@mireillemoslerltd.com.