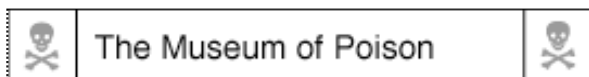


For immediate release

MARK DION



March 30 to April 29, 2000

Bonakdar Jancou Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of work by Mark Dion, entitled "The Museum of Poison."

"The Museum of Poison" continues Mark Dion's investigation into the construction, interpretation and presentation of nature and history. His installation work combines elements of the ready-made art object with the pseudo-scientific rigor and theatrical style of the museum. Often using the institutional bureaucracy of the museum as the primary subject explored in his work, Dion seductively blurs the line between archeology and artmaking. Employing irony, humor and an improvisational style, his installation work confronts and emphasizes the inherent contradictions between the nature of an artifact and the context in which it is displayed for popular consumption.

In "The Museum of Poison," Mark Dion will convert the main gallery space into an archive of the quietly vicious battle to control nature through agricultural pesticides. Just inside a false brick façade, a series of display cases, poisons and stacks of archive boxes are covered in light plastic sheeting and gathered towards the center of the space. Intentionally vague as to whether the process of reorganization or decommission is underway, the transient state more importantly adds a layer of bureaucracy to the viewing experience. In the second gallery, Dion presents three display cabinet containing 21 of the most notorious biocides (herbicides, fungicides and insecticides).

Continuing his investigation of this disjoint between what is (in this case) dangerous and deadly material and its consumable, seductive presentation, poison becomes an almost quintessential metaphor for a museum's ability to contextualize the subject matter it contains. In this sense, the installation is a direct reference to MoMA's recent 'Museum as Muse' exhibition (featuring work by Dion) that effectively undermined the critical strategies of its components simply by categorizing them as such. The installation also refers to our culture's desire for instant gratification at any cost, and overly simplified solutions for complex problems.

"The Museum of Poison" will run concurrent with the related "Nature Bureaucracies" (March 17 – April 8) at American Fine Arts located at 22 Wooster Street. Recent exhibitions include "Two Banks: The Tate Thames Dig" at the Tate Gallery, London; and "Where the Land Meets the Sea," Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; "The Museum as Muse" Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Dion is featured currently in the "Carnegie International 1999/2000" at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.

Available publications on Mark Dion: *Archaeology*, Black Dog Publishing, 1999; *Mark Dion*, Phaidon Press, 1997.