

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Matthew Cusick

November 3 – December 16, 2006

Lisa Dent Gallery

660 Mission St., 4th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105 (between 3rd Street and New Montgomery)

Matthew Cusick's newest paintings are a series of Texas highways traversing allegorical landscapes. For his second exhibition at Lisa Dent Gallery, Cusick has refined his technique of painting with maps, using them as a surrogate for paint - their inherent visual qualities of tone, value, and density employed to render the spatial image of the highways.

The maps used for this body of work come from Cusick's collection of American world atlases and school geography books from 1872-1945, a time period during which the world's geography changed dramatically. By juxtaposing antique maps with modern highway images, Cusick tells the story of America's foreign policy and domestic infrastructure and its struggle to remain the ultimate superpower. The gold-hued international maps of the background landscapes are treated as sculptural objects. Each country has been individually cut out, retaining its natural contours and political boundaries, and then reconfigured into an assemblage of geology gone awry. In creating these imaginary landscapes, Cusick has drawn from the ravaged topography of abandoned open pit and strip mines and has captured the caustic quality of these chemical wastelands.

The oblique aerial images are based on photographs Cusick took during a helicopter tour of Dallas-Fort Worth's paradigmatic highway interchanges. The "Mixmaster" in Fort Worth, recently reconstructed as part of the NAFTA Superhighway, was previously explored by Cusick in "Mixmaster I" (2004). For this exhibition, Cusick includes his newest work, "Course of Empire: Mixmaster II" (2006). This new "Mixmaster," layered with animal migration paths, trading posts, and railroad depots is viewed by the artist as a portal into history.

Cusick captures the beauty of potentially disastrous architectures. Color choices such as the cyan blue in "Chasing the Dragon" (2006) make the images both poignant and disturbing. Maps are still masterfully cut and inlaid, but some areas are left untreated while others appear to have already eroded. For Cusick, these tiny deviations in craftsmanship are apocalyptic gestures revealing the ominous end to our civil ambitions.

Along with the paintings, Cusick will also create a wall installation. Using maps and map pins, Cusick plays with the world's geography to create conceptual histories of war, colonization, disputed territory, political upheaval, and globalization.

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday through Friday, 12:00-6:00pm and by appointment

Resume, images from her previous exhibition and press can be found at our website, www.lisadent.com.

For additional information or images contact:

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