

THE DRAWING ROOM 16R Newtown Lane East Hampton NY 11937 T 631 324.5016

ADAM BARTOS

Yard Sales

From May 30 through July 7, The Drawing Room in East Hampton will present *Adam Bartos: Yard Sales*, an exhibition of recent color photographs by New York photographer Adam Bartos. In this new work, Bartos turns his lens to random arrangements of objects encountered by chance at tag sales, creating lush, 'found' still lifes that resonate both formally and metaphorically. In the spring of 2009, Damiani Editore will publish this body of work in *Yard Sale Photographs*, Bartos' fourth monograph.

Taken at close range from an elevated vantage point, Bartos concentrates on fragments of the stuff relegated to boxes in our garages, revealing their hidden aesthetic potential. A pair of weathered skateboards silhouetted against black asphalt littered with grass clippings becomes a compressed formal abstract composition. Likewise, a swirling jumble of aquamarine and black plastic tubes forms a powerful serpentine arabesque, at once striking and foreboding. Akin to early 20th century photographs that celebrated the industrial gleam of the Machine Age, Bartos' images give dignity to our 21st century castoffs. A close-up of the shimmering coral colored interior of a mid-century suitcase contrasted by a blue rhinestone and white linens within, is one of several photographs that invite the viewer to imagine a personal narrative. Presented in saturated pigment prints on sheets more than three feet tall, the humble beauty of Bartos' chosen objects becomes monumental.

When asked about the appeal of the yard sale subject matter, Bartos comments, "I am interested in the life of objects, and obsolescence. I have always been drawn to photograph 'found' still lifes on tables and desks. What things end up where and next to what, either by arrangement or chance, seems like a good metaphor for the human condition -- you can never really know why." He also acknowledges the unique appeal of the yard sale context, which permits entree to the otherwise inaccessible homes of strangers. Yet, as in earlier series, Bartos' inspiration to excavate artifacts from the past extends beyond the documentary, and is paired with his aesthetic precision to create rigorous formal compositions.

After studying film at New York University, Bartos turned his attention to still photography. A six-month stay in the Ocean Park neighborhood of Los Angeles in the late 1970s provided the setting for his important early series of Southern California streetscapes and interiors, which were published alongside later images of Paris in his 2006 book, *Boulevard*. Among the distinctive bodies of work that Bartos created after his return to New York, both *International Territory: The United Nations 1945-1995* and *Kosmos: A Portrait of the Russian Space Age* are documented in acclaimed books of the same titles. His photographs are represented in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

For further information or reproduction quality images, please contact Susan Papa at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com.