

MATTHEW STRAUSS

DEAD LANGUAGE

Matthew Strauss: Dead Language is a new series of work which combines still life painting with modern technology to create dark compositions comprised of mysterious, multi-layered imagery which intrigues viewers. The title *Dead Language* conveys a sense of loss and mourning. Viewed optimistically, the title ignites a desire to translate or systematically decode the many symbols to derive meaning or perhaps discover lost secrets.

Strauss works with common objects imbued with symbolism to craft unsettling assemblages wherein the overall meaning challenges the viewer. Interested in the metaphorical and fleeting quality of traditional still life painting, Strauss creates unreal juxtapositions (from real objects) to address similar notions of futility, failure, and obsolescence. Using still life as a conceptual framework, Strauss constructs his own visual narrative by using miniature sculptures created from fragments of toys, modeling kits and museum shop souvenirs. He then stages them on a sterile, slightly shaky looking table – the ubiquitous still life element – and photographs the images which are later digitally manipulated before being transferred to a screen printing template. Updating the traditional genre of still life, Strauss delivers a scene outside of reality that remains consistent with his visual metaphor between art history, literature and poetry.



DEAD LANGUAGE, 2003-2005 (INSTALLATION)

mixed media, dimensions variable



POEM #68/NOTE FROM PISA (HOW TO DIG YOURSELF A HOLE), (TRIPTYCH) 2005

flashe, acrylic, acrylic latex, silkscreen ink and pencil on canvas, 72 x 72 inches each