



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Esko Männikkö

Cocktails

September 7 - October 21, 2006

Reception for the artist: Thursday September 7, 2006, 6-8 pm

The Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Cocktails*, an installation of photographs by Finnish artist Esko Männikkö. Exhibited internationally in venues such as the Venice Biennale, the Sao Paolo Biennial, the Yokohama Museum of Art, the Shanghai Museum of Art and the Tate Liverpool, this is Männikkö's first exhibition in the United States since 1997.

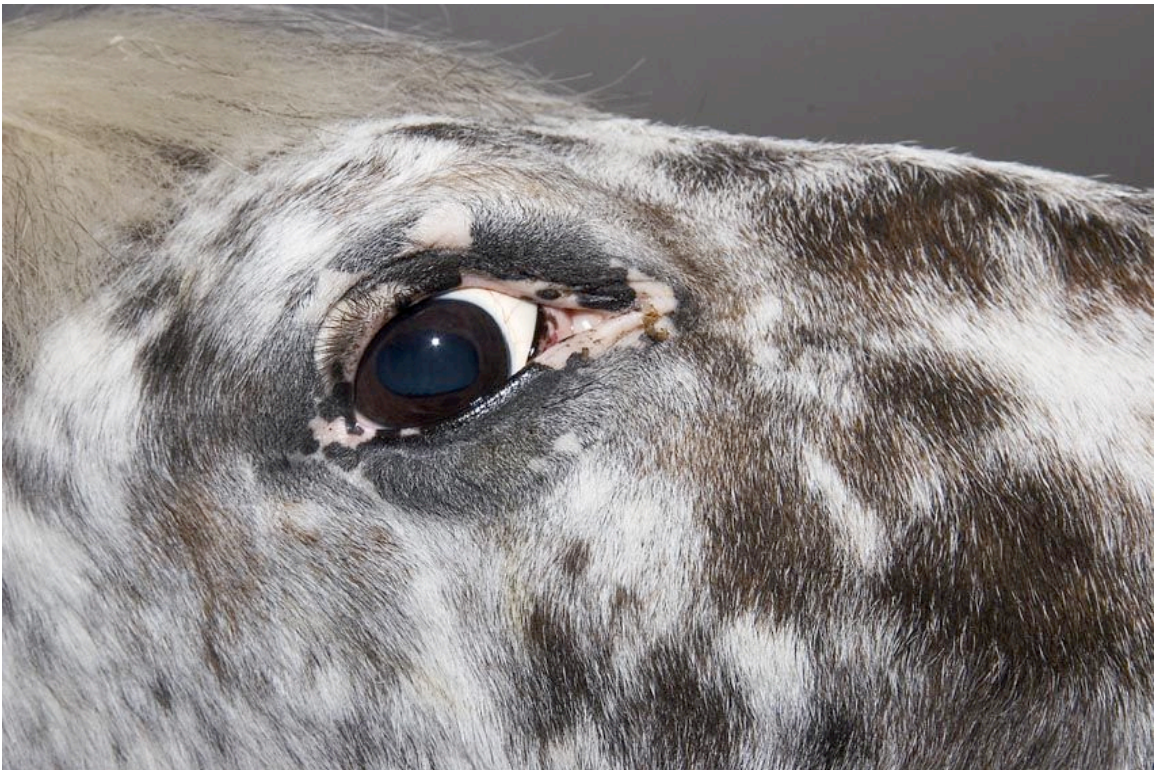
The exhibition is composed of work drawn from three recent series entitled *Southern Comfort*, *Flora and Fauna* and *Harmony Sisters*. The images, most of which were taken in Männikkö's native Finland, are intermixed in an installation created by the artist to suggest a narrative about life in a rural setting. As he describes it, "My installation is like a village, composed of people, animals, buildings, still lives – all together." Männikkö places his photographs in old found frames carefully selected to complement the details or subjects of his images. He also uses the rough thrift store quality of the frames to serve as an ironic reference to his backwoods origins.

Southern Comfort is comprised of interiors filled with discarded, abandoned objects and nonsensical furniture assembled from odd bits of refuse. These objects and spaces emanate a sense of history undercut with an ironic haphazardness. An avid outdoorsman, Männikkö devotes a portion of each year to hunting and fishing. The small intimate studies of dead birds and fish in *Flora and Fauna* pay respect to their subjects and the cycle of life in nature. In *Harmony Sisters* horses and cows are seen up close and in detail. Focusing on the texture of hair, the patterns of markings or tight shots of the muzzle and teeth, the images are nearly abstract.

Recognized as Young Artist of the Year in Finland in 1995, Männikkö first gained international prominence with his portraits of Finnish bachelors in the "Far North" who epitomized a kind of loneliness and self-reliance. In 1996, he was awarded an ArtPace international artist residency in San Antonio, Texas, where he photographed the residents of two small Mexican American communities on the border of South Texas. An ongoing series titled *Organized Freedom* focuses on abandoned houses discovered on walks throughout remote parts of Finland. With twenty-five percent of the country unemployed, the owners of the houses have, in the words of the artist, "locked the door and walked away" leaving their rural life for the city.

Works by Männikkö have been acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Foundation Cartier, the Moderna Museet and the Malmo Art Museum, among others. In April Männikkö was awarded the first Ordonez-Falcon International Photography Award and he is currently the subject of a 100-piece retrospective at the Kursaal Art Museum, San Sebastian Spain.

The gallery and artist are grateful for the support of the Consulate General of Finland.



Untitled #5, 2005

**For visuals please contact Tracey Norman, tnorman@yanceyrichardson.com,
ph: 646 230 9610**