

Matthew Sleeth
Various Positions (parts 1 through 6)
March 19 to April 18, 2009

Opening Reception:
Thursday March, 6-8 p.m.

In Matthew Sleeth's American premiere, *Various Positions (parts 1 through 6)*, the artist explores various conceptual positions within each image and the relationships between the various images that make up the exhibition. The work is an attempt to organize and make sense of our chaotic society, to render it more perfectly than it exists. Coaxing beauty and order from our frenzied work-a-day lives, *Various Positions* exposes the dominance of mass market culture in its' shaping of our collective views of the world. The artist seduces the viewer with his powerful images' seductive beauty, holding our attention long enough to convey the social content held within the work.



TV Tower Shanghai / C-print / 71.5" x 89.5"

Historically photography has been dominated by two key positions: candid narratives and constructed images. Sleeth works hold a tension between these two positions; the viewer is not quite sure if they are looking at found narratives perfectly composed and controlled or if these scenes are complete digital fictions created so convincingly they could be found narratives. *Various Positions* brings a fusion of these binary cornerstones: serial verses singular images and found verses constructed narratives.

"I want my photography to depart from the traditions of orthodox documentary," Sleeth explains. "I want to engage with my times – to make pictures that grapple with social and political ideas." His visual language is one of dynamic design, uncanny juxtapositions and telling marginal detail. Witty and with a strong sense of style, what appears on the surface to be a relaxed 'snapshot' actually involves a complex and at times unorthodox visual syntax. It is always a good idea to check out the very edges of Matthew Sleeth's photographs, because this is often where the key to the image is to be found; what raises the work above the interesting subject matter is his willingness to engage with the beautiful – a recently much mistrusted quality.

In this, he is very much in tune with the new generation of practitioners who, disillusioned with the downward spiral of postmodern intellectualism, seek to engage with the world through the language of popular culture, fashion and, especially, design. Above all Matthew Sleeth's photographs are about the social, political and cultural landscape and those who inhabit it. "I am interested in photographing people and places in a way that informs a broader reading of the subject as part of a cultural group and also as an individual", he explains. While embracing the aesthetic language of popular culture and design without becoming trite; spiking his images with wit without sinking into the sardonic; Matthew Sleeth creates images of depth, subtlety and lasting value.



Millenario Lights, Marunouchi / C-print / 71.5" x 89.5"

Sleeth's work has been widely collected and exhibited throughout Australia, Asia and Europe and he was recently named by PDN Magazine New York as one of their influential "30 under 30" fine artists. Matthew is represented in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, the State Libraries of NSW and Victoria, Monash Gallery of Art, National Portrait Gallery and Brandts Museet (Denmark). Matthew Sleeth is exclusively represented in North America by Claire Oliver Gallery, New York.

Public transportation to the gallery

Take C or E train to W. 23 St., walk west to 10 Ave., then walk 3 blocks North to 26th street & 1/4 block west

OR Take any north/south local train including C, E, 1, 9, F, V, N, R, W or 6 to the W. 23 St. stop, & take the M23 bus west to 10th Ave. then walk 3 blocks North to 26th street & 1/4 block west **OR** The M11 bus stops on 10th Ave. between W. 25th & W. 26th Streets.