

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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MEL KENDRICK **Works from 1995 to Now**

March 17– April 30, 2011

Opening reception:
Thursday, March 17th from 6-8pm

David Nolan Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of “Mel Kendrick: Works from 1995 to Now,” featuring five sculptures and a work on paper.

In the 1980’s, Mel Kendrick was recognized for his small-scaled sculptures carved from wood. By cutting, slicing, rearranging, gluing and doweling fragments of wooden blocks, Kendrick created eccentric vertical configurations suggesting spiraling movement and expression while at the same time evoking the static and anchored aspects of totems and primitive art.

However, in 1995, Kendrick broke radically with the work of the previous decade to embrace a more conceptual and analytical approach to material and process. This reappraisal, as well as a new acknowledgement of the anthropomorphic nature of the vertical objects, exposed more clearly the informal narrative. As his approach became more straightforward and his decision-making was made more visible, fewer cuts severed the wood while bases and supports for the pieces became subject matter within the sculptures themselves. In “Black Trunk,” one of the sculptures in the exhibition from 1995, a formidable, hollowed out tree trunk has been cut apart horizontally and reassembled. Dovetail joints originally held the sculpture together but were later removed when Kendrick realized that by the pressure of its own weight, the sculpture would remain intact and standing. Voids left by the dovetails allow light to permeate the dark brooding mass of the emptied whole that measures close to ten feet tall.

Kendrick inked the cylindrical surface of “Black Trunk” to create a ‘woodblock’ of the surface entitled “Trunk Drawing.” In a surprising result, the print becomes a seismographic read out of the process of the reconstruction of the trunk with the dovetails functioning as markers on the time line.

“BDF” (“*Big Daddy Fun*” 1995) is the only cast sculpture in the exhibition. Comprised of a grotesquely gnarled and cut tree branch standing next to its cast rubber double, both objects appear poised in ungainly mid-step. Kendrick was interested in pairing two objects in which one emerges from the other

yet remains unique, much like Robert Rauschenberg's fascinating yet absurd and ultimately futile attempt at creating identical paintings with "Factum I" and "Factum II."

Dialectical relationships also came into Kendrick's visual vocabulary of pairings when he began to think in terms of interior versus exterior space--and top versus bottom. In "First Coring" (2000), the inside pulp of the limb of a tree was cored out and reassembled in jigsaw fashion right next to the bark or "skin" of the same element. White plastic ties suture the exterior of the branch together while steel rods, bolts, and nuts support the interior.

A similar process is employed in the making of "Plug and Shell" (2000), "plug" referring to the hollowed out part of the sculpture and "shell" to the exterior skin. In this case, the rough and highly recognizable "treeness" of the exterior serves as a stark contrast to its denuded twin.

Mel Kendrick was born in 1949 in Boston, MA, and currently lives in New York. He was educated at Phillips Academy Andover, Trinity College, Hartford and received an MA from Hunter College. His work is located in numerous private and public collections around the United States including the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the High Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art and *MOMA*. Most recently, Kendrick's sculpture was featured in the Mad. Sq. Art Public Program at Madison Square Park in New York 2008-2009 with a series of five monumental black and white concrete works called "Markers." Beginning March 26, 2011, an exhibition of new monumental cast concrete pieces at the Mary Boone Gallery, Chelsea, will run concurrently with "Works from 1995 to Now."

Gallery Hours: Tues-Fri, 10-6; Sat 11-6

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