

POSTMASTERS

postmasters 459 w 19 street nyc 10011 212 727 3323

fax 212 229 2829

postmasters@thing.net

For immediate release

October 21 – December 2, 2006

THE WAR IN IRAQ

new paintings by Steve Mumford

opening reception; Saturday, October 21, 6-8 p-m

These paintings are based on experiences and impressions from 11 months in Iraq. I went there four times, from April, 2003 to October, 2004, spending about half of my time embedded with various US military units throughout Baghdad and the Sunni Triangle. I also got to know many Iraqi artists in Baghdad, who I hung out with on each trip.

I was drawing and painting in watercolor throughout these trips, but looking for compositions for oil paintings that might go beyond simply recording daily life and tasks. I wanted to distill something essential about the drama of war, beyond right and wrong.

These aren't anti-war paintings. They aren't political. I'm not trying to address the morality of war, or George Bush's foreign policy agenda. I went to Iraq because I wanted to know what being in a war zone was like, and paint about it from my own subjective experiences. The events in the paintings are either things I saw or things that happened nearby.

I found being in a war zone addictive. An uneventful patrol with a platoon (99% of them were) might elicit a "That was fucking boring!" from a soldier. I always knew what they meant, that yearning for action, yet dreading it. I'm sure the young Sunni insurgents, lying in ambush, felt exactly the same thing.

The Vietnam War photojournalist Tim Page was recovering from shrapnel wounds when he supposedly got a request for a submission for a book with the purpose of "taking the glamour out of war". Page declined, telling his friends that you could no more take the glamour out of war than out of sex, or the Rolling Stones.

Steve Mumford, September 2006

This is Steve Mumford's first show of paintings based on his experiences and observations in Iraq. They range from a 15 feet long epic depiction of a battle in Bakubah to an intimate portrait of a dying insurgent. Mumford's drawings have been published as a book "Baghdad Journal" in 2005, and twice appeared as a portfolio section of Harper's Magazine. They have been shown extensively in the last two years. "Steve Mumford: Baghdad and Beyond," is presently on view at Tufts University Art Gallery in Medford, MA, and will travel to Savannah College of Art and Design Gallery in Savannah, GA in early 2007.

*Postmasters Gallery located at 459 west 19th street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6 pm
Please contact Magdalena Sawon with questions and image requests
www.postmastersart.com e-mail : postmasters@thing.net*