



D o s H o m b r e s





Steven L. Mayes, *On the way to Florissant*, 2003, archival ink on watercolor paper

Tom Chaffee's large "dark" paintings meet head-on with a culture accustomed to cryptic instruction and a growing suspicion that directives are risky things. Found objects are meticulously transformed within a new context where they speak separately and collectively, one suspects, to each other and, to us. Symbols, gestures, directions, are Tom's "stenciled" references to things we know we know, but not in the painting where he has placed them. I anticipate stencil references to enigmas much deeper than the surface that contains them. Painted gestures are reminders: all brushed paint is gestural, all gestures records, and, in Tom's paintings, records that shift with each new viewing. Part of the shift is ours; part is that of an enigmatic world of shifting risks.

Steve Mayes explores new ways to get image and design on paper. Steve prints pixels. Pixels are not new, but their willingness to settle to the expressive purpose of the artist is a recent struggle still under development. Mixing pixels with optics controlled by the artist pushes a medium into new territory. Of course, a new medium is never without ancestry. We find it difficult to think beyond photography. But those

artists who do think beyond will give birth to a medium. A medium becomes new when it shifts our eyes, shows us things not seen before, or familiar things seen in a new way. The artist is an architect of the eye. The printed image is the other side of this emerging medium, marrying screen-mediated design to paper. Pixels behave differently on paper than they do on screen. Substitute papers for paper and the possibilities are hard to tame.

Artists tame our unruly world so that we can have private and shared moments of understanding—even when the understanding is not a comfort. Sometimes I think "the world" is art's most avid admirer, pondering our understanding and moving on to dislocate us anew. Fortunately, we have artists who move on as well.

William Allen
Professor of Art

Tom Chaffee, *Museum Studies*, 2002, mixed medium on canvas



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Tom Chaffee
Steven L. Mayes

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Bradbury Gallery

Fowler Center
Arkansas State University
201 Olympic Drive
Jonesboro, Arkansas
870-910-8115

Cover: Tom Chaffee, *Florence (The View From Texas)*, 2002, mixed medium on canvas
Steven L. Mayes, *Night Snow 2*, 2003, archival ink on watercolor paper