

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles, CA
November 28th, 2012

Charlie James Gallery, located at 969 Chung King Road, Los Angeles, CA 90012 Presents:

Richard Kraft – *Eyes Words*

December 15th thru February 2nd, 2012

Artist's Reception – Saturday, December 15th – 7-10pm



Richard Kraft, Tube Portrait #20. Archival Pigment Print. 44 x 58.5 inches. 2012

Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present *Eyes Words*, our second solo show of photographs and collage by LA artist **Richard Kraft**. A visual work in three movements, *Eyes Words* consists of two iterations of Kraft's *Tube Portraits*—one a series of large-scale photographic prints, the other a collection of one hundred miniature photographic images. These two rooms are separated by an installation of collages and drawings that are composed entirely of language. Separately and in relationship to one another, these three elements probe the tensions between the known and the unknown, meaning and the inscrutable while creating a different kind of space of the imagination and the interior mind.

Inspired by Walker Evans's *Many Are Called*, the *Tube Portraits* are black-and-white photographic stills from video taken surreptitiously of travelers on the London Underground. Kraft selects and re-photographs split-second moments during which each subject seems to reveal something private and naked in this very public space. He shifts color to black-and-white, then crops tightly on each face, almost eliminating the physical world in which they exist. Many of the faces simply float in a deep void of black or a haze of gray, which upon closer inspection start to dissolve into interlaced lines – the face as screen.

In the first room seven large *Tube Portraits* are presented, each nearly four feet high. Creating a cathedral-like atmosphere, the portraits convey a kind of emotional infinity, each seemingly a window into the complexity of a human life. The presentation in the main gallery is in explicit contrast to the basement installation, where a grid of one hundred tiny tube portraits will be presented. From a distance this piece is an abstract composition of grays and blacks against a white background, but closer inspection reveals multiple series of

images (some depicting the same subjects as in the upstairs gallery) each printed in the form of a postage stamp from an undeclared country.

Between these two installations the rear gallery installation serves as an interlude of sorts. In this chamber Kraft presents a number of monumental text pieces, one of which, entitled *Ulysses*, is a 5 x 8 foot collage in which every page of James Joyce's text has been cut up and reassembled. In two twinned large scale drawings Kraft reinterprets Franz Kafka's famous *Letter to his Father*. Just as the "Tube Portraits" radiate the tension between what we can see with our own eyes, what we may never know, and what we might possibly imagine, these works—though composed only of words—ask the viewer to ponder the space between meaning and its absence.

Richard Kraft grew up in London and lives in Los Angeles. Kraft earned his BFA at Parsons School of Design and his MFA at the University of Michigan. His work has been exhibited in galleries such as L.A. Louver, Rosamund Felsen, Greg Kucera and non-profit spaces including the Portland Art Museum, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, the Photographic Resource Center, among others. He has frequently used public spaces for installations with work appearing on the sides of buses and in library aisles, as well for performances such as at Oxford Circus in London and along the full length of Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. In the summer of 2009, he conducted a series of performances at Speakers' Corner in London and at several rural sites in Scotland and Northern England. Most recently he has embarked on a series of walking performances (for anywhere from one to one hundred walkers). Walks have already taken place in cities such as Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and remote locations such as Death Valley and the Wendover Airfield in Wendover, Utah. Siglio Press will publish an artist's monograph in 2013. Siglio has already released six multiples (*100 Soldiers for a Revolution, Untitled: Kapitan Kloss, Two Tube Portraits, R.S. A Library Portrait, Conturbatio: A Selection and Study for Ulysses/Let's Look Around*). Kraft has a solo exhibition in the fall of 2013 at the Laguna Art Museum.