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For more information
or visual materials please contact
Rachel Gugelberger
at 212-727-9330

Jason Middlebrook: *Vein*
October 11 – November 8, 2008
Opening reception: Saturday, October 11, 6-8pm



Sara Meltzer Gallery is pleased to present *Vein*, an exhibition of new works by Jason Middlebrook, marking the artist's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery. Typical to Middlebrook's practice, the exhibition is comprised of a variety of media including sculpture, painting and works on paper.

For the first time, Middlebrook brings his recycled architectural materials directly into the gallery's interior space to further investigate themes of ecology, entropy and environmental concerns, emphasizing the tense relationship between humans and nature.

For *Vein*, Middlebrook has cast hundreds of various recycled plastic containers -- including plastic water bottles consumed in the gallery -- in multi-colored concrete, creating forms that suggest geological strata. Arranged in groups throughout the gallery, they offer a glimpse of our participation in consumption and waste and serve as preserved records of human life.

Inspired by Alexander Calder, *Wood from All over the World Mobile* is constructed from driftwood the artist collected from a beach in Hawaii. A cluster of the suspended driftwood suggests the so-called "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," a floating island of trash in the North Pacific twice the size of Texas. Middlebrook has painted images of wood veins onto planks of wood in varying heights that lean against the wall, letting the wood's grain dictate the direction of his markings. Steel stands display wooden slabs painted with images referring to the natural environment of the materials' own origin. In two-dimensional works, Middlebrook juxtaposes the natural and man-made environments with images of birds placed into geometrically abstract environments and the urban grid.

Drawing from the history of art, including Minimalism, Land Art and Pop Art, Middlebrook continues to investigate the complex relationships between nature and culture, order and chaos, and decay and regeneration. Embodying folk art's craft tradition and social purpose, *Vein* is a conduit that bridges Middlebrook's longstanding practice of using particular materials to uncover a deeper sense of social awareness, responsibility and perhaps even advocacy. As with his site-specific architectural projects, Middlebrook has -- in a small but significant way -- reduced the amount of debris going to landfills, recycling waste and found materials into objects imbued with a new sense of meaning and intention.

Jason Middlebrook lives and works in Hudson, New York. His work has been exhibited at institutions worldwide including Museo de Arte de El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador; Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy; Wellcome Trust, London, England; Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Germany and was included in the Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. Nationally he has exhibited at California Museum of Photography, Riverside, CA; Aldrich Contemporary Museum of Art, Ridgefield, CT; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO; Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA; Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE; and in New York at New Museum of Contemporary Art; Public Art Fund at Metro Tech; Wave Hill; Whitney Museum of American Art; Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson and The Fields Sculpture Park at Omi International Arts Center, Ghent, NY.