

OR GALLERY PRESS RELEASE

## **SMASH YOUR FACE IN David Ostrem- photos 1977-79**

David Ostrem was born in Portland, Oregon in 1945. A 'Baby Boomer' who saw the Vietnam war as a "crime against an emerging nation", Ostrem 'dodged the Draft' and arrived in Vancouver in April of 1969. Ostrem recalls that he was not exposed to contemporary art until his early twenties. An animated film of a Manhattan street scene by Red Grooms, along with the work of Warhol were among his first inspirations. In 1974 he enrolled at the Vancouver School of Art and specialized in Photography. The still-life photographs in this exhibition represent his first mature works. They reflect both the Pop Art aesthetic which was predominant among artists and students of the time and the Conceptual and Minimalist strategies that Ostrem was introduced to by artists and instructors such as Ian Wallace and N.E. Thing Co. . Ostrem's photographic still-lives were followed by the paintings and silk-screen prints for which he has since become well known.

Guest curated by Vancouver artist Roy Arden, this exhibition will present 20 of Ostrem's austere black and white photos, twelve of the more whimsical colour prints, and six previously unseen, and rather dark, cibachrome prints. These images are largely studio still-lives depicting table top arrangements of diverse objects. Ostrem managed to give form to his mindscape in compositions which can now be interpreted as time capsules providing a very personal reflection on the realities of an era. References to current events and the recent past are effected through the inclusion of news, popular, and subcultural printed matter. Rock & roll, notions about art, Vietnam, hippie 'freak' culture, and the banal everyday coincide or collide in sometimes unsettling, other times humorous allegory. In recent art there has been a resurgence of some of the aesthetic strategies and subjects engaged by these works which makes this reconsideration timely and appropriate. An illustrated exhibition catalogue will be forthcoming.

**May 26 – June 23**

**Opening Friday May 25 at 8pm**