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By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO
Published: December 1, 2006

Photo (Photo by Seong Kwon)

This artist's recently installed "Office Semaphore" in Lower Manhattan is a zesty homage to the maritime flag signaling systems used by ships to convey messages to one another. The work, an interactive Public Art Fund project, consists of an old-fashioned tourist telescope, above, at the corner of a plaza in the middle of the financial district, its lens trained on the window of an upper-floor office in a nearby skyscraper. Each day the man working in the office, or his assistant, arranges objects on his window sill. The combinations and order of objects -- mostly office supplies and personal items and effects -- convey a message, like a semaphore, which viewers down on the plaza can interpret using a key-chart on the telescope. Changed a few times a day, sometimes more frequently, the arrangements indicate the subject's mood, productivity and overall workplace conditions. The day I took a peek, the objects included a calculator, a potted plant and a jar filled with binder clips, code for "I am drifting." If you're lucky, you'll even get to see the office subject -- a middle-aged corporate lawyer whom the artist has asked to remain anonymous -- at his desk, on the telephone or interacting with colleagues. It's like "Rear Window" crossed with an episode of "The Office." ("Office Semaphore," 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza, corner of Liberty and William Streets, through Jan. 14. Stairway entrance to the plaza is on William Street at Cedar Street. Information: www.publicartfund.org.) BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

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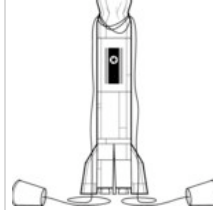
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