

Josh Smith

Saturday March 31 to April 28, 2007

Luhring Augustine is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of new gallery artist Josh Smith.

Through books, paintings and collages, Josh Smith explores the ideas of authenticity, authorship and the mythology of the artist. His casual anti-art aesthetic intentionally defies the rules of artistic convention in an ironic and informed manner. Smith's training and background in printmaking influence the conceptual and formal foundation of his work; the signifying components of his methodology consist of systematic processes, replication and serial repetition. Groups of works share size, media and a template-like content, engaging the viewer with materiality and concept. The aesthetics of the work tend to evolve on their own.

Smith's collages on plywood are made up of an array of plebian and recycled materials such as newspapers or take-out menus that are often overlaid and contrasted with handmade marks. These components play on the tension between innovation and mechanization; the manufactured copy is elevated to the level of the creative medium and denigrates the significance of the singular artistic gesture.

The announcement paintings continue this contrast and combination of the original versus the mass-produced. Examining the commercialism of today's art market, which places value on art based on its scarcity and originality, Smith uses the traditional woodcut technique for a serial output. Traces of the artist's hand, revealed in print flaws and duplications expose the tenuous space between the authentic product and the copy.

The name paintings incorporate and manipulate the letters of his name, Josh Smith, as a motif for the canvas, addressing the mythology of the artist by a display of ironic self-promotion. Devoid of subject matter, abstract or representational content, the enlarged autograph at first appears as self aggrandizement, a notion quickly debunked through the casual execution of the brush strokes and the artist's profoundly generic name.

In the new body of work made for this exhibition, entitled *Abstraction*, Smith creates archetypes of abstract painting using vibrant colors to create effortless compositions. He continues to use a template-like motif, taking it to a more nuanced level by exploring the abstract expressionistic style. The heavy-handed art historical reference to a school of artists posited as mystical geniuses loses its potency in Smith's renditions that incorporate off colors and cartoon-like shapes. These simulacra of abstractions have an impoverished aesthetic that frame this artistic tradition within an aura of insufficiency and humility. Smith continues to explore notions of critical hierarchy and authenticity to directly expose the purpose of painting itself.

Born in 1976, Josh Smith is from Knoxville, Tennessee and lives and works in New York City. In 2006 he has had solo shows at galleries in Paris, Oslo, Brussels, Detroit and Chicago. His museum shows include a solo exhibition at The Power House in Memphis, entitled *Dial J for Josh* and he was included in Saatchi Gallery's *USA Today* show at the Royal Academy of Arts, *Uncertain States of America* at the Serpentine Gallery in London and the Astrup-Fearnley Museum in Oslo. Smith will participate in the upcoming Lyon Biennale curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

For more information please contact Vanessa Critchell at 212-206-9100 or vanessa@luhringaugustine.com