

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: RASHAWN GRIFFIN

RECEPTION: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH 4-6PM

ON VIEW: SEPTEMBER 7-OCTOBER 5, 2008

HOURS: WED-SUN 12-6PM

Smith-Stewart is pleased to present the US solo gallery debut of New York-based artist Rashawn Griffin. The exhibition is comprised of an installation, five drawings, a series of eight paintings, and two sculptures.

Rashawn Griffin's diverse practice is grounded in the poetic investigation of social space. Using found everyday materials, from bed sheets to decorative tassels; Griffin's elegant compositions awaken displaced memories of a collective experience, taking us on a journey that collapses time and space.

At Smith-Stewart, Griffin constructed an installation specific to the site out of stretched denims and fabrics to form panels that "frame" the gallery architecture. A playful re-thinking of space, the walls become art and the art become walls. The stitches, seams and velcro on the panels suggest a human figure. Hung side by side or directly on top of the panels are moody drawings of non-distinctive male figures in various states of quiet contemplation.

In *GED* series, 2008, that consists of eight 16" x 20" paintings, Griffin has torn and collaged pages from Ursula Le Guin's 1968 fantasy novel "A Wizard of Earthsea". The orphaned pages appear to almost fly off the paintings' edges. In doing so, they act as conceptual portraits of Le Guin's central protagonist, Ged. Griffin's physical engagement with literature, tearing words from original context, destabilizes meaning forever.

In total, Griffin is doing the work of a poet, carefully choreographing abstract and narrative impulse to reflect on the theatre of life.

Rashawn Griffin was born in 1980 in Los Angeles, raised in Olathe, Kansas and lives and works in New York. He received a MFA from Yale University in 2005. He was a 2006 resident of the Studio Museum AIR program. His work was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, is currently the subject of a two-person exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem (RSVP) and is presently represented in the group exhibition "Freeway Balconies" at the Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin curated by Collier Schorr.

SMITH-STEWART is located on 53 Stanton Street, between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets. Gallery Hours are Wednesday through Sunday, noon to six. The nearest subway stops are 2nd Avenue/Houston Street on the F & V lines, Grand Street on the B & D lines and Bleecker Street on the 6 line. For more information, please contact the gallery at amy@smith-stewart.com, 212.477.2821. Or visit the website: www.smith-stewart.com.