

ROBERT STEELE GALLERY

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down with the evil empire, 2007. Mixed media, 60 x 72in

Press Release
New Paintings by

Marcus Kenney
I'm tempted to begin with the ending

4 September – 6 October 2007

The **Robert Steele Gallery** at 511 West 25th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues in Chelsea is pleased to announce the opening of *I'm tempted to begin with the ending*, new paintings by **Marcus Kenney** on Tuesday, September 4th through October 6th 2007. A reception will be held **Thursday, September 6th from 6 to 8pm**; the artist will be present. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 to 6pm and by appointment.

Using the castoff detritus of a bygone – and going fast – American culture: postage stamps, cigar bands, marble dust, paint-by-numbers silhouettes, bits of wallpaper and happy, unconflicted images straight out of our *Dick and Jane* and *Little Black Sambo* past, **Marcus Kenney** creates collage paintings whose quiet narratives slowly reveal an apocalyptic whimsy, the wallop of a definitely political bite.

See Dick. See Jane. See Dick doing god-knows-what with Jane. The easy references here of course, are Joseph Cornell, Henry Darger and even Balthus: collected junk transformed to the ethereal; eerie and disturbing sexual tension either aimed at, or unconcerned with, you the viewer. But tucked away, away are Henry Miller, Truman Capote and Harper Lee - even Joseph Mitchell. Like **Kenney**, these last three are all Southerners, all with the Southern gift of quiet narrative, a wealth of descriptive detail and a pace and cadence that pull you in on their terms until the tranquil air reveals its true edge.

This exhibition will coincide with *Topics in American History*, the most comprehensive museum presentation of Kenney's work to date, currently on view at the **Telfair Museum of Art** in Savannah, Georgia. An 80-page **monograph** will be published by Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) and available at the end of September, 2007.

Cathy Byrd, in *Art in America*, wrote that "*the range of contemporary social and ecological issues addressed in (Kenney's) works elevates the nature of his materials.*" Jerry Cullum wrote in *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* in 2004, "*The technique of collage has rarely been put to more intelligently entertaining uses.*" And Felicia Feaster, in the *Best of Atlanta* summarized, "*Archeologist-meets-conceptualist Kenney is like Noam Chomsky on a thrift store spree. He's a mix-master of the mad mothball flurry of imagery and matter that makes up our cultural legacy.*"

For Information Contact:

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