

## DEREK ELLER GALLERY

For Immediate Release:

### **Keith Mayerson**

*Kings & Queens*

October 20 - November 25, 2006

Opening Reception: Friday, October 20, 6 - 8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Keith Mayerson.

Embracing both modernist and post-modern ideals, Mayerson seeks to create self-aware paintings that are content-rich and relate to the larger socio-political world, and still retain agency through their warmth, emotion, and transcendence. In this series, he chooses images that he finds deeply meaningful, and - while he negotiates the abstract notions of negative and positive space in rendering the painting - he thinks about their significance to him, with the aspiration that his subconscious might become infused into his conscious creation. Mayerson hopes that his popular imagery has "universal" appeal via its iconography, but also is an homage to the personas within each of the works.

Seen together as a series, the paintings that make up *Kings & Queens* create a non-linear narrative that could be perceived as a "Last Judgment" allegory of our apocalyptic times. Considered separately, each is a scene containing individuals from our culture whose activities and/or struggles have had a massive productive impact on our perceived way of looking at life and our world. Some of these personas are from the arts: Marcel Proust, James Dean, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and more. Some are from the world of politics and Civil Rights movements: Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Eleanor Roosevelt and JFK. Some of the paintings are from scenes of films that changed cinema history and have affected western consciousness: *My Own Private Idaho*, *King Kong*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Rescued from the Eagles Nest* (one of the first special effects movies of all time, from the studio of Thomas Edison). There is also a painting of Jupiter - symbolic not just for a god but for our own Earth that is quickly becoming its own "gas planet" - and references to some of Mayerson's favorite artists of the past: Velazquez and Michelangelo, Warhol and Johns, Caravaggio and Rembrandt. Ultimately, the show is an elegy, with each of these scenes painted for their allegorical impact on our current world, but also a hopeful model for the future, to bring about positive models of true kings and queens.

Keith Mayerson first came to prominence in the early 1990's with his graduate thesis show *Pinocchio the Big Fag*, his homoerotic retelling of the famous children's story. In 1995 Keith Mayerson moved to New York City. His first New York solo show was in 1997 and featured textured and optical abstract painting alongside equally nuanced paintings from film stills. He has published a critically acclaimed graphic novel (a collaboration with Dennis Cooper), and is in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art. This will be his third solo show with the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 615 West 27th Street, between 11th and 12th Avenues. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com).

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