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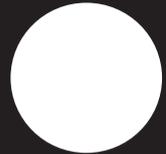
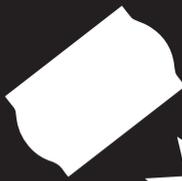
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MON-SAT: 11AM-5PM



99¢ DREAMS

Artist:

SHAUN CRAWFORD

SEPTEMBER 17 -
OCTOBER, 2016

RECEPTION: SAT,
17 SEP, 6-8P,
AFTERPARTY: 8PM-
MIDNIGHT, MUSIC
BY COMPREHENSIVE

NEW YORK - Martinez Gallery is pleased to present the first solo exhibition of Shaun Crawford. Until recently, he has been mostly engaged with graffiti within the urban environment, but drawing has always been an important feature in most of his work. What we are presenting in this exhibition goes even further. Entirely devoid of writing and tags, this group of drawings and paintings is primarily inspired by the materials Shaun uses to work with adolescents. And, as we might expect in such cases, cartoons are the main feature characterizing these works.

Cartoons are hardly foreign to the graffiti tradition. But in the works of Crash, Daze, SAMO, Futura 2000, Fab Five, Ramelzee, Zephyr, and others, cartoons do not serve to articulate political or social questions – even if the works stemmed from a desire for social change. By contrast, Crawford devotes drawings and paintings directly to the campaign against the Zika virus. But Crawford's work shown here represents an even broader departure from the tradition. The tags of these other artists serve essentially as attention getters, both responding to the artists' need to transcend themselves and, like commercial labels, claiming their market value. Crawford does the reverse: he drops the tags, while trying to defy the irredeemable world from which both he and these other artists come. At the same time, he creates a joyful and sarcastic, at times grotesque aesthetic of survival, one that allows him to make fun of himself while making fun of all of us.

If once the direction went from cartoons to tags, Crawford goes back to cartoons. On the one hand, he is attempting to produce new art forms. On the other, he does not want to be fatally condemned to express himself forever within existing parameters – to become, at the end, just another sociological issue. Instead, he looks to R. Crumb and Harvey Kurtzman as breakers of new ground.

Indeed, Crawford has indicated a desire to abandon the subways and street walls and to turn in a new direction, toward the possibility of finding a way out of the personal and world experience of the political and social reality of his surroundings. This is a desire to communicate to the people with transparency and generosity, and, at the same time, through satire, which can openly share our dark sides and anxieties in a manner both humorous and seductive. In the global economy, Crawford is aware of how seduction meets manipulation and manipulation meets consumption, in a unifying global desire: Everything at 99 cents!

For more
information:

www.martinezgal
lery.com

SHAUN CRAWFORD was born in New York in 1978 and grew up in Harlem. He is a self-taught artist who has been drawing for as long as he can remember. At 11 years old, he felt attracted to graffiti crews from East Harlem such as MOM, GNR, TDS, and UW, but it was in high school that he started to make a name for himself as a 'booster' (thief) and when he met the RFC and DFA crews. He stopped painting from age 18 to 24. At 24, he moved to Bushwick, Brooklyn, and felt inspired by the graffiti scene there. By then, he noticed graffiti writers getting involved with the gallery scene. Unfortunately, as he says, 'I was caught in a case and had to stop writing 'cause I couldn't actively paint with an open felony charge. Trying to figure out what I was going to do while I had this charge pending, I started my own ink brand and made some decent money off that. Started working on doing a logo, mascot and graphics for that label, Do 'Em Dirty. Did artwork to help sell the company and started doing a whole lot more of my own art work, drawing, painting etc.' Once his case was thrown out of court, he resumed his street work, teamed up with graffiti writers REMO, SAME, MINT and SERF, and started a crew called PPP (Peter Pan Posse). By then, he managed to participate in a gallery group show and began to take himself more seriously as an artist. He has been involved in several group exhibitions since then. He is now pushing his own boundaries and trying new things.