

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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RICO GATSON

DARK MATTER

February 13 – March 14

For his fifth exhibition at the Feldman Gallery, Rico Gatson will exhibit a large-scale video installation, sculpture, paintings, and works on paper that continue his exploration of racial issues and shared cultural histories. Gatson uses conceptual and other artistic strategies to distance emotionally-disturbing events and injustices which can never be fully understood or forgiven. The exhibition suggests that coming to terms with the grief of the past may only be possible through a process that takes place over time. With his eye for geometry and its orderly laws, Gatson balances the dark side of his subject matter.

The exhibition features a reconfiguration of *Spirit, Myth, Ritual and Liberation*, 2008, a site specific video installation created for the New Orleans biennial art exhibition, *Prospect.1*. It was shown at the historic location of the African American Museum in the Treme section of the city, the first community of freed slaves in the country. The videos, consisting of fast-paced, kaleidoscopic patterns appropriated from films, include the murder scene of Meredith Hunter from *Gimme Shelter* (1970), projected on white Plexiglas panels; and a theatrical scene of violence from Jean Luc Godard's socio-political film, *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968) which is projected on the floor. Gatson's sound track includes *The Upper Room* by gospel singer Mahalia Jackson and *Death Letter Blues* by the Delta blues singer and guitarist, Son House.

Black sculptures, fashioned from wood and other vernacular materials, include *Magic Sticks*, a cluster of upright snake-like forms, referencing native, religious-based artifacts and confronting the notion of early twentieth-century sculpture based on the "primitive." *Nigeria Power*, a wooden wall panel, conflates the aesthetic design of a target with its sinister function. Several works on paper depict hand-drawn lines in African colors and patterns radiating from photographs of well-known, African American activists, suggesting an historical perspective and the power of words that have a life of their own.

Rico Gatson has had recent one person exhibitions at Steve Turner Contemporary (Los Angeles), Pocket Utopia (Brooklyn), the MCAD Gallery at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and the Cheekwood Museum of Art (Nashville). His work has been exhibited at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Exit Art, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and MIT List Visual Arts Center.

There will be a reception on Friday, February 13, 6 – 8 PM. Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 – 6. Monday by appointment. For information contact Sarah Paulson (212) 226-3232 or Sarah@feldmangallery.com.

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