

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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RAYMOND SAUNDERS

New Paintings

Exhibition dates: November 13 through December 22, 2007

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, December 6, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by renowned Bay Area artist Raymond Saunders

Raymond Saunders' signature assemblages are masterfully constructed and have a fresh and spontaneous quality that juxtaposes words and images from world culture with his personal artistic interests and preoccupations. Saunders' keen sense of composition, form, and texture is balanced by his erudite use of color. His surfaces are spattered with expressionistic swaths of paint, richly colored, with delicately drawn figures, or inscribed with chalked words, names, and numbers. Saunders often uses materials from daily life such as handbills, comics, signs, old doors, which he has culled from his frequent travels. There is an abundance of invented and appropriated imagery and iconography which reference race, war, family, religion, poverty, wealth, people, and places amongst other subject matter. His powerful paintings and fluid spirited compositions combine to give the works a dense and engrossing narrative power.

"In an age when art is often drained of emotion and attempting to fly on increasingly thin and convoluted ironies, in a moment when beauty is out of fashion, these painters of blues, these collagists-magicians remind us of the immediate power of art to act on the mind and body directly through the senses, without explainers or translators, elevating the intellect, opening the heart and stirring the soul."

Excerpt from essay by Glenn O'Brien in the catalogue for *Raymond Saunders/ Jean-Michel Basquiat*, exhibition at Galerie Sho, Tokyo, Japan, 2003.

RAYMOND SAUNDERS was born in Pittsburgh, PA, but has lived in the Bay Area since the 1960s, completing his MFA at the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1961 where he now is a professor. Over the years Saunders has received many accolades for his work including the Prix de Rome, 1964-1966 and a Guggenheim Fellowship, 1976. Saunders has had solo museum exhibitions at Carnegie Museum of Art, the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Addison Gallery of American Art, among others.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgallery.com