

**DAVID B SMITH**  
GALLERY

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**JOSH KEYES SOLO EXHIBITION**

**“SPROUT”**

**AT DAVID B. SMITH GALLERY**

**May 30, 2009 – July 3, 2009**

**DENVER** – Josh Keyes' new solo exhibition, *Sprout*, will be on display at the David B. Smith Gallery (825 Santa Fe Drive), beginning May 30 through July 3, 2009. Keyes will present a series of new paintings that focus on the theme of overgrowth. *Sprout* showcases the artist's established vocabulary of imagery, intertwining animals and objects to create a mysterious and sometimes unsettling juxtaposition between the natural world and the man made landscape. The work conveys anxious but realistic visions of what the future may hold as a result of current global warming predictions. A reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 7 PM to 10 PM.

The paintings presented in *Sprout* emerge as an imaginative and playful response to Alan Weisman's, *The World Without Us*. Weisman illustrates the natural world gradually reclaiming the Earth's cities and manmade structures were humans to suddenly disappear. This notion inspired Keyes to portray a world overgrown; employing the vivid imagery of animals roaming through dystopic gardens. In "Scorch II" (2009) for example, four deer emerge from a fiery sedan; antlers ablaze. Though engulfed in flames, they remain stoic, staring back in an almost accusatory fashion. Keyes' paintings reference the political, economic and ecological tensions that are present in the world today.

In addition to new paintings, *Sprout* will feature an interactive sculptural piece inspired by an amorphous object that Keyes had encountered while visiting the Art Institute of Chicago Museum. The Boli, a handmade artifact by the Bamana People of the West Africa, takes the form of an unidentifiable creature. Composed of a wooden armature "core" wrapped in white cotton cloth, layers of clay and sacrificial material (goat and chicken blood, chewed and kola nuts, alcoholic beverages, honey, metal, animal bones, vegetable matter, millet) are added over time to create an encrusted surface. Each added layer is meant to afford the Boli greater spiritual power. It is said that each element added to the structure symbolizes various parts of the universe; the whole can be read as a model of the Bamanas' cosmological belief. *Sprout* will feature Keyes' personal interpretation of the Boli; inviting the viewer to become a participant in the additive process of creating the external form of the piece. Instead of the traditional elements of blood and animal bones, soil and seeds will be available to apply to the surface of the sculpture as well. The seeds placed on the surface will gradually sprout and grow throughout the duration of the show. By combining community, ritual, and participation, this process will bring an end result of growth and regeneration.

George Melrod, Editor of Art Ltd. Magazine, will be writing a catalogue essay for the exhibition. The piece will also be hosted on [davidbsmithgallery.com](http://davidbsmithgallery.com).

Josh Keyes has been featured in over 50 gallery exhibitions and contemporary art fairs nationwide. His work has recently appeared in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Complex*, *Seed Magazine*, *Juxtapoz*, *The Stranger*, *Etapes International* and *San Francisco Magazine*.

**About David B. Smith Gallery**

David B. Smith Gallery is Denver's venue for emerging contemporary art. Since its founding in 2007, the gallery has been committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions featuring work from some of today's most compelling artists with growing international reputations. Through participation in leading art fairs and extensive media coverage, David Smith has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. In August 2008, The New York Times hailed the Gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." In addition to its curatorial program, David B. Smith maintains an active publishing division, Limited Addiction, which produces limited edition artist prints and monographs.

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