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Vampire, 2004/printed 2011

Jayson Keeling

See Jungle! See Jungle! Go Join Your Gang, Yeah. City All Over! Go Ape Crazy.

Exhibition dates: October 28, 2011 – February 25, 2012

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Third Streaming is pleased to announce an exhibition by Jayson Keeling. *See Jungle! See Jungle! Go Join Your Gang, Yeah. City All Over! Go Ape Crazy.*, marks Keeling's first one-person show at the gallery. The exhibition features a selection of rarely seen photographs shown alongside a new series of paintings and videos.

Taking its cue from a 1981 Bow Wow Wow album, *See Jungle!* highlights the strong influence of music on the artist's practice and his fascination with popular and street culture. Drawing from hip-hop, punk, jazz, the 1980's New Wave movement as well as from film and modern and pop art, the work blends visual imagery and text - often appropriated from music lyrics and film narratives - into unexpected outcomes. In addition, Keeling's bi-cultural upbringing between Jamaica and the Bronx, New York comes into play in subtle ways.

The exhibition title provides a direct example of the cultural-recycling that saturates Keeling's work. The Bow Wow Wow album cover features a photograph of the band posed as a tableau vivant of Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*, making Keeling's appropriation of the title a playful commentary on cultural fluidity, the urban jungle, and the power of reinterpretation.

Several of the works on display straddle the gritty physicality of punk and hip-hop and the high-gloss aesthetic of fashion photography. The dialogue between these seemingly disparate outlooks creates a raw energy that Keeling takes advantage of to highlight themes of gender, race and sexuality as well as to provide a critique on commercialism and socio-political issues. In *Vampire*, 2004/printed 2011, and *Mathias*, 2003/printed 2011, the careful composition mixes with the interplay of textures to emphasize the strength and sensuality of the human body, while providing a commentary on the dominance of advertising and branding in contemporary culture.

The sense of duality in Keeling's photographs carries over to his paintings as well, such as *Shiny Black Anarchy* and *Brut*, both 2011. Covered with layers of glitter and debris, the works feature violent diatribes that demonstrate the power of the written word. The addition of debris adds to the grittiness of the text while sullyng the innocence of the glitter, allowing the paintings to fluctuate between the allure of sparkling glamour and that of crude aggression.

Glitter, an opulent, pseudo-precious substance, inherently fluctuates between these two poles; it simultaneously connotes youthful play and seductive show business. Keeling's experience as a

photographer and film director in the fashion and the porn industries add greater weight to his chosen medium, as the tiny pieces of glitter he uses to create his paintings are just as shiny and artificial as the surfaces of his early work.

Reinforcing Keeling's attachment to allusion, the title of *Brut* refers to *art brut*, a term coined by French artist Jean Dubuffet in the late 1940s. Dubuffet described *art brut*, literally *raw art*, as art produced outside the confines of mainstream culture, particularly in relation to the work of insane asylum inmates. With this direct reference, Keeling highlights the counter-cultural spirit that permeates his own work, and examines the dialogue between subcultures and their mainstream assimilation.

Keeling's attraction to glitter also presents itself in his video work, as in *Marked Man*, 2011. The video is a recording of a piece he performed in downtown Newark, New Jersey as part of *Low Lives 3*, a festival for performance art. Keeling stands as the eponymous 'marked man', while blood, milk, glitter and chocolate sauce are aggressively thrown on top of his body. Each substance carries a symbolic weight - blood and milk are important icons in both Jamaican and African cultures, glitter suggests all of the dichotomies in Keeling's paintings, and chocolate sauce often has racial implications. Above their individual import, however, the order that these elements are used connotes a compelling transition from natural, life-giving fluids to indulgent luxuries.

Jayson Keeling was born in New York and raised between Jamaica and the Bronx. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn. His work is also on view at *El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files 2011* through January 8, 2012. Previously, his work has been included in exhibitions at The Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh, PA), Queens Museum of Art, The Bronx Museum, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, among others. Keeling has been awarded residencies from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council as well as the Apex Outbound Residency in Ethiopia.

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