

HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

MATT KENNY - *DAYBREAK*

April 15 - May 14 | HMGP | 60 Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

Reception: Saturday, April 15, 6 - 8 pm

RSVP or to visit at another time contact: info@halseymckay.com



Brooklyn, N.Y. — Halsey McKay is pleased to present, *Daybreak*, three new paintings by Matt Kenny at HMGP, 60 Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn. These paintings experiment with character and caricature in the context of the artist's urban realism, recasting the World Trade Center as a grotesque, ambiguous symbol of contemporary New York. Kenny's Monster paintings essentially present a rejoinder to the excessively developed urban landscape of post-9/11 New York, anthropomorphizing the World Trade Center's iconic "Freedom Tower" into a monster, which appears across the series at times wrathful and distraught. Inspired by community signs protesting commercial development in Houston, this ostensibly lighthearted characterization of One World Trade is as deliberate and complex as the imposition of cartoon elements into Kenny's expertly-crafted photorealist landscapes. Seen from a street-level perspective, with gnashing teeth, cracking knuckles or menacing claws, the WTC monster is antagonistic, embodying in its expressive features many of the ambiguous qualities which the building is meant to passively symbolize for the city and nation alike.

Constructed overlooking Ground Zero, and designed to be exactly 1,776 feet tall, the skyscraper at One World Trade Center carries connotations for many people of resilience, defiance and grief. Its erection in the wake of the destruction of the Twin Towers is a stridently conservative symbol of business-as-usual, an enacted interest in putting the tragedy of September 11th swiftly behind us without stopping to mourn. This ambivalence is at the heart of Kenny's monster, his face is the face of a memorial office tower. Kenny's enduring interest in the significance of 9/11 focuses less on exposing some totalizing truth than exploring the various narratives formed around earth-shattering events, and the ways they shift and reconfigure our shared reality. In his evocative personification of the WTC tower, Kenny animates an object that is simultaneously a potent symbol and constant presence in the city today, with a specific focus on the elements of time and place that embody a citizen's viewership. Through his expressive defamiliarization of the banal landmark, Kenny points in his art to quotidian encounters that are rich with hidden meaning, and turns our attention toward an ambiguous symbol enmeshed within the daily experience of modern life.

Matt Kenny (b. 1979, Kansas City, MO) Kenny earned a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Halsey McKay Gallery, Jeffrey Stark, The National Exemplar, Karma, Derek Eller Gallery and 55 Gansevoort in New York, and F in Houston. Recent group exhibitions include *Harry Smith's Shirt*, F, Houston; *Smile*, curated by Todd Von Ammon, Halsey McKay Gallery; *Interiors*, with Aaron Aujla, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto; *American Sculpture*, The National Exemplar; *Urbanities*, James Fuentes, New York; *Ghost Current*, curated by Ryan Wallace, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark; *Teste*, Galleria Alessandra Bonomo, Rome, among others. Kenny lives and works in New York, NY and is represented by Halsey McKay Gallery and F.

HMGP is a new private exhibition space in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Located at 60 Greenpoint Avenue, between Franklin and West, HMGP, will be used for Halsey McKay Gallery programming, community events and as a place to meet with clients who can't always make the trip out to the gallery's flagship location in East Hampton. Adjacent to Transmitter Park on the East River, HMGP is two blocks from the Greenpoint Avenue G train stop, above Paully Gee's restaurant. Matt Kenny's new World Trade Center paintings, the subject of which is visible at the end of the street, inaugurates the space.