

Immediate Release

## **DARE #2: PUBLIC ADDRESS BY ALLISON SMITH**

**Curated by Lauren Cornell**

**February 15, 16, 17, 2005 - 7.00 pm**  
**Admission is free and open to the public.**

What ever happened to the tradition of the public address? These days, politicians blink and stutter in the face of internationally syndicated broadcasts, whereas in yesteryear elected officials and citizens alike passionately took to the podium to speak their minds, uninhibited by the flack of a televised audience. For Dare #2, artist Allison Smith revives this tradition by giving a public address at Foxy Production. Here, fashioned as a Civil War era recruiting officer, Smith will deliver a call to arms and a call to art - in one.

For the past ten years, Smith has conducted an investigation of the Civil War reenactment community, a group of living historians who re-stage the events of this period as a form of pedagogy and cultural practice. Smith has appropriated the vernacular of this community, using it as an aesthetic palette for sculptural installations that examine the role craft has played in the construction of national identity. Smith has taken a particular interest in the notion of "trench art", or art made by soldiers from the materials of war. Her recent work proposes that since we are living in the context of war, contemporary art can be a form of "trench art", and artists a volunteer militia.

Smith's Public Address for the Dare Series will explore how the Blue and Red states of the last two presidential elections echo the Blue and Grey states of the American Civil War, which similarly divided the U.S. citizenry on geographic, moral and ideological lines. Furthermore, Smith will enlist the Union versus Secession conflict as a metaphor to illuminate tensions within contemporary GLBTQ communities, who find themselves split between mainstream and subcultural identification.

Allison Smith's address at Foxy Production is part of a series of events that aims to energize a public and recruit participants to her campaign. Over the summer of 2004, Smith organized a weekend encampment on the Catskills property of Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett in which artists came together to create their own historical event. Smith distributed a broadside asking people in her artistic and queer communities what they are fighting for, and inviting them to fashion their own uniforms and declare their causes publicly. This initial gathering of the troops, or Muster, will culminate in an event sponsored by the Public Art Fund, to be held on Governors Island in May 2005.

Allison Smith (1972) holds an MFA from Yale University and completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. She has exhibited at numerous venues including Artists Space, New York (2005); Space 1026, Philadelphia, PA (2003); and the Palm Beach Institute for Contemporary Art (2001). Smith is represented by Bellwether, New York, where she presents her next solo show in May 2005.

**The Dare Series is a program of new performance curated by Lauren Cornell. For further information or high resolution images, please contact Michael Gillespie or John Thomson: t 212.239.2758, info@foxyproduction.com**

**Upcoming at FP:**

**Ben Jones (March 1 to April 2, 2005)**