

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Banks Violette

16 November through 23 December

Team will present a solo exhibition of new work by Banks Violette from the 16th of November through the 23rd of December 2000. Team is located at 527 West 26th Street, cross streets Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, on the ground floor.

Rainbows, roses, teardrops, campfires, memorial wreathes, thorns, SS insignia, skulls, and pentagrams are some of the images that struggle for dominance in Banks Violette's first one-man show. Made of paintings, sculptures, and an in-situ installation, this exhibition evokes a particularly American brand of trauma, rendered in an old-style, high manner with a nod toward contemporary sculptural practice. Violette combines the classed iconography of Slayer album covers, Heavy Metal jewelry, and muscle-car autobody design with a gilded art history. The resultant artifacts of this process function as cultural maps, combining radically divergent influences in the creation of an unhappy collage of insistent melancholia.

Beginning on March 11th 1987, Bergenfield, New Jersey experienced a wave of teenage suicides. The first four dead were found parked inside an unused garage, having inhaled carbon monoxide from the driver's 1977 Camaro. Soon after, copycat attempts were made and the media, as is their wont, isolated an "epidemic." The adolescents identified as "problems" were consistently both lower class and pointedly involved with heavy metal subculture.

Violette's project does not specifically address the details of the Bergenfield suicides. Instead, the work structurally reiterates certain conditions that both informed and allowed the tragedy to operate. Employing the visual rhetoric of heavy metal iconography, an attempt is made to underline an hysteric gestalt — an acceleration of alienation that requires a vacuum without history, or an attendant claim of objectivity. This alienation that is driven in reverse order by its inability to cathect with a history not already in the service of grand narrative, a script that precedes an event.

In a gesture of contaminated romanticism, Violette represents these events with an iconography that is culled, not only from the recognizable subcultural point of origin, but from an art history laced with the same degree of internal conflict. Violette operates within an uncomfortable dialectic — between Bergenfield, NJ and Bergen Belsen he has located a geography of cultural space that mediates between suburban angst and dangerous cultural signifiers; between a loser's death's head jewelry and Totenkopf campguard insignia.

For further information and/or photographs, please call 212.279.9219. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 6pm.