

**Keith Duncan**

Curated by Willie Birch

**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010– January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

*(Opening reception Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 – 8:00pm)*

*“Duncan’s works are narrative, autobiographical, figurative, political and layered in personal symbolism and metaphors. His use of folklore speaks directly to his sense of place and history. With his understanding of form as language, Duncan is constantly in dialogue with his neighbors, as well as with the art world.”*

—Willie Birch

Like every great author, Keith Duncan weaves pertinent and prescient social critique through satire and metaphor in his monumental, fabric-on-canvas paintings. Duncan is indeed a self-described storyteller, and the goal of each work is a revelation of sorts, achieved through a thorough examination of the symbolic imagery used to formulate and express them. Throughout all of his work, the stories are two-fold: an intertwining history of the artist's childhood, implanted into that of his hometown, New Orleans, and all that it has come to represent for the artist and the nation overall. Pulling from themes and events engraved to the core of this city, his beautifully rich works cull both historical and contemporary subject matter, including hurricanes Betsy, Camille and Katrina, racism, poverty, spirituality, and Barack Obama. Much like the city itself, Duncan melds varied imagery in brilliant, dramatic ways. Their compositions appear almost accidental, seemingly improvisational, like a cutting jazz tune wafting out of the French Quarter. The viewer is provided quite clearly with insight into Duncan's famous, embattled, embittered hometown, serving not only as the backdrop, but the metaphor for the trials and difficulties the artist himself has faced and risen above.



Kings of Nostalgia, 2010  
Acrylic on fabric on cancanvas, 6' x 8'

The series on view at CUE Art Foundation, Duncan's first solo show in New York City in over ten years, is titled *A Message to the Press* and is comprised of eight works, all measuring at least six feet by eight feet. The figures found throughout this series have a flat, cartoonish look to them, created by strong, black outlines. Indeed the picture planes are generally all flat, this being reinforced by the patterned fabric included in the works, like in



Upon this Land, 2010  
Acrylic on fabric on canvas, 6' x 10 1/2'

*Kings of Nostalgia* (2010, top right). Greens, purples and golds, colors often associated with Mardi Gras, are placed alongside the pastels and earthy tones of a sunset on the bayou, like in *Upon this land* (2010, left). Drawing from history, Duncan creates a canon of symbols and meaning – personal, national and universal, that the viewer can sift through, decipher and interpret on their own, allowing them to add to the story.

**(More, over)**

For additional information, please contact Ryan Thomas, Programs Coordinator, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email [ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org)

Free catalogues available.

### ARTIST'S BIO:

**Keith Duncan** received a BFA from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and an MFA from the City University of New York, Hunter College. His solo exhibitions include Taller Boricua Gallery and Gallery X, New York, NY; Independent Arts Gallery, Queens, NY; Danny Simmons' Corridor Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and Artsproject Gallery, New Orleans, LA. Selected group exhibitions include Art in General, David Beitzel Gallery, Rush Arts Gallery, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Pontiac, MI; Bronx River Art Center & Gallery, Bronx, NY; and the Tustin Center, Philadelphia, PA. He was awarded the Camille Cosby Fellowship, The Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, and in 2001 his work was commissioned for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Washington, D.C. Duncan's exhibition at CUE marks his first solo show in New York in over ten years.

### About CUE:

CUE Art Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit forum for contemporary art and cultural exchange that provides opportunities and resources for under-recognized artists. We value the astonishing diversity of creativity that artists provide and the importance of their activity in the social context of the city.

CUE provides artists, students, scholars and art professionals resources at many stages of their careers and creative lives. Our programs include exhibitions, studio residencies, publications, professional development seminars, educational outreach, symposia, readings, concerts and performances. Since 2002, we have operated from our 4,500 square foot storefront venue in the heart of New York's Chelsea Arts District.

CUE exhibiting artists are chosen by their peers who are themselves selected by a rotating advisory council from across the country. This pluralistic process ensures that CUE consistently offers diverse viewpoints from multiple disciplines of artistic practice.

Simply put, we give artists their CUE to take center stage in the challenging world of art.

CUE Art Foundation is a non-profit arts organization dedicated to promoting culture by supporting the creativity of under-recognized visual artists.

Major program support is provided by Accademia Foundation, The Viking Foundation, Agnes Gund, The Fifth Floor Foundation, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc., The Greenwall Foundation, The Jacques & Natasha Gelman Trust, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, The Joan Mitchell Foundation, Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Koret Foundation, The Hyde and Watson Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, William Talbott Hillman Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts (a State Agency).



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