



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Swarm Gallery is pleased to present

### **MATERIALS UNORGANIZED | Casey Jex Smith**

September 5 – October 5, 2008

Artist Reception | First Friday, September 5, 2008, 6-8PM

**OAKLAND, Calif.** – 7 July 2008 – Swarm Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Casey Jex Smith.

Casey Jex Smith's life thus far has been fully immersed in the Mormon faith and culture. In this church, much like any other, there is a significant visual history. Most of this history is depicted in 2D illustrations that tell stories of the formation of the church, its growth, movement around the Midwest, its exodus to the West and finally, the settlement of Zion in Utah. The images of these stories are used primarily as educational tools in Sunday school. In the last two decades, there has emerged a new "Mormon Art" market, not much different than Thomas Kinkadee paintings with Christian/Mormon themes. It has become what is popular taste in Utah and other Latter Day Saint (LDS) communities and the artistic and aesthetic standard that other art is compared (except for a very small portion of the LDS population).

Smith has complained that this "kitsch" is a misrepresentation of a new generation of artistic and aesthetic standards in the Mormon community. In graduate school, he decided to create a new "Mormon Art" that reflects himself and his peers more accurately.

Smith's current work is about creating a visual narrative of spiritual experience. He uses pen and ink, graphite, colored pencil, acrylic and collage, and a mix of strict representation and abstraction. Conceptually, he connects his faith and belief of visions, celestial visitations, and divine dreams with the physical world. He borrows imagery from biblical and Book of Mormon illustrations and from modern and contemporary abstract painting and drawing.

*Materials Unorganized* is a reference to a scripture, Abraham 3:24 that says "...we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell..." This is an excerpt from the Creation Story as written in Mormon scripture.

*Casey Jex Smith received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2005. This past Spring he was an affiliate artist resident at the Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito and exhibited at the Drawing Center in New York. Casey currently lives and works in Atherton, CA.*

### **PRESS CONTACT and IMAGES**

Svea Lin Vezzone, Director | Tel: 510 472 7930 Email: svea@swarmstudios.net

Andrea Antonaccio, Associate Director | Tel: 415 385 5739 Email: andrea@swarmstudios.net

Swarm Gallery | 560 Second Street, Oakland CA 94607 | www.swarmstudios.net