

June 2008

## **Two summer exhibitions to open at University Art Museum**

**Steve DiBenedetto: Edge Dwelling**

**Keith Edmier: & Episode 1**

On view July 10 through September 21, 2008

Artists' Reception: Thursday, July 10, 5 – 7 pm

Artists in Conversation: Tuesday, September 16, 7:00 pm

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ALBANY, NY--- The University Art Museum will present work by **Steve DiBenedetto** and **Keith Edmier** in two concurrent exhibitions this summer.

Steve DiBenedetto and Keith Edmier have been friends for many years; their studios are in the same building in mid-town Manhattan. Although disparate in their approach to making art, they share certain concerns including an interest in how popular culture and media images insinuate themselves into our unconscious coupled with a general antipathy toward any esthetic that ignores the significance of personal fictions and messy contingencies. They also share a penchant for science fiction movies, especially Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980) and Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Viewing both DiBenedetto's and Edmier's work in this context is the visual equivalent of listening in on one of their animated conversations. Never dull or disengaged, these conversations often take unpredictable and circuitous paths—to go along for the ride guarantees that you will never see things from the same perspective again.

**Steve DiBenedetto's** exhibition will include both older and more recent paintings and drawings that plumb the motifs and idiosyncratic subject matter for which he is best known. His reoccurring motifs include octopi, Ferris wheels, carousels, blasted television sets, and more recently, generic office buildings with mirrored facades. His canvases are densely layered and scraped; his compositions are disjunctive and unsettling. All this is matched by discordant color choices that embody both heaven and earth; one passage may be as vibrant as a Gothic rose window or a 1960s Day-Glo poster, the next as muck-ridden as well-trod soil. Continually probing the follies and glories of human achievement, DiBenedetto's expansive reservoir of imagery suggests that the destructive and regenerative forces of the natural world are inextricably bound to realms of consciousness beyond our control. In his most recent paintings and drawings, DiBenedetto seems to be reaching beyond the internalized landscape toward an architectural no man's land filled with burning skies and twisted skyscrapers. Here the future is up for grabs, but only after it wrestles free from the long shadows of Modernism.

**Keith Edmier**, known for his elegiac sculptures and installations based on childhood memory, will present an exhibition of autobiographical objects and ephemera that have influenced his early esthetic development. Edmier will weave together his own personal recollections of growing up in the suburban Midwest during the 1970s with larger cultural phenomena including selected masks and prosthetics from the legendary special effects makeup artist, Rick Baker. Edmier, who began his career in Hollywood fabricating prosthetic molds for horror films, cites Baker as an early influence and mentor. Edmier will also tap into archival material from children's television shows based in Chicago during the 1970s including *Bozo's Circus*, *Gigglesnort Hotel*, and *The Ray Rayner Show*. These personal archives and collected source materials will be exhibited alongside a new work by Edmier based on the original television set of *The Ray Rayner Show*. These commingled hierarchies and collapsed timeframes are typical of Edmier's devotional efforts to give memory a tangible form.

Steve DiBenedetto and Keith Edmier's exhibitions are accompanied by separate catalogues. Each volume includes color illustrations of works in the exhibition, as well an essay about DiBenedetto by art critic, Ken Johnson and archival source notes and interviews compiled by Edmier on his early influences.

**Steve DiBenedetto** was born in Bronx, New York in 1958. He received his BFA in 1980 from Parsons School of Design, and currently lives and works in New York City. He has had several solo exhibitions in the United States and abroad, in Italy, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. He has also been included in important thematic exhibitions including *Remote Viewing* at the Whitney Museum in New York (2005). He has received several awards throughout his career including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship Award, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Painting, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award. He has taught at the School of Visual Arts, Columbia University, and Cooper Union in New York and at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, New Jersey. DiBenedetto is represented by David Nolan Gallery in New York and Daniel Weinberg Gallery in Los Angeles.

**Keith Edmier** was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1967. After graduating high school, Edmier pursued a career in special effects in Hollywood and briefly attended the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia before moving to New York to enter the art world. Edmier's work has been exhibited at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and CCS Bard Hessel Museum in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York where he had a recent comprehensive survey exhibition. He is in the collections of the Tate Gallery, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Israel Museum and is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation 2001 Biennial Award. Edmier is represented by Friedrich Petzel Gallery in New York.

This exhibition has been funded by the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, and University Auxiliary Services.

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**For further information or visual materials on Steve DiBenedetto and Keith Edmier, please call (518) 442-4035 or visit our website at [www.albany.edu/museum](http://www.albany.edu/museum).**

**MUSEUM SUMMER HOURS:**

**Tuesday through Saturday 11 am to 4 pm.**

**AFTER LABOR DAY:**

**Tuesday through Friday 10 am to 5 pm,**

**Saturday and Sunday noon to 4 pm.**