

MEDIA RELEASE

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Willy Heeks
recent paintings

June 9 – July 22, 2006
Opening Reception: Friday, June 9, 2006, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

For Immediate Release –San Diego, CA

Event Summary:

Scott White Contemporary Art presents and exhibition of recent paintings by award winning New York artist Willy Heeks. The exhibition opens on Friday, June 9, and will be on view through Saturday, July 22, 2006. The artist reception will be held in the gallery, on Friday, June 9, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Exhibition Details:

The renowned art critic, Kenneth Baker of the *San Francisco Chronicle* once described Willy Heek's paintings as "handsome messes". Indeed, the influence of abstract expressionism is striking when first feasting eyes on one of Heeks' canvases. His paintings depict layers upon layers of paint, in various densities - splattered, poured, and drawn. Almost every inch the canvas shows the artist's hand. Critics have often compared Heeks' process of painting to the composition of music, depicting layers of complexity and rhythm. Drawing on this parallel, Heeks' paintings would be the equivalent to jazz – confidently improvisational, cool, and energetic.

Heeks moved to New York from his native Rhode Island, to attend the Whitney Museum's prestigious Independent Study Program in 1973, the same year he obtained his B.F.A from the University of Rhode Island. Like many young artists in New York, he struggled to make ends meet, and paid his dues in everything from construction, to truck driving, to working in a gallery.

Heeks continued to paint persistently, making great strides through the 70's and 80's. He was awarded the Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978 and again in 1989. In 1982, he received an invitation to exhibit at the progressive P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York. The list of honors grew to include the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, as well as the Painting Award granted by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

He gained prominence through national and international exhibitions during the 80's and 90's, with solo shows in New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Portland, D.C., Boston, and Amsterdam. Heeks' paintings are included in the Museum of Modern Art in New York and San Francisco, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in La Jolla, among others. His work has been discussed and reviewed in every important art publication, including *Art News*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *Flash Art*.

Heeks now lives and works in the town of Wakefield, in his native state of Rhode Island. He has actively exhibited through the late-90's, and into the new millennium, and has continued to receive recognition from prestigious art institutions. He was bestowed an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Rhode Island College in 1995, and recently awarded the Gottlieb Foundation Grant in 2004, as well as two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Awards in 1997 and 2001.

Scott White Contemporary Art is proud to present this forthcoming exhibition of new paintings by Willy Heeks. In a much-anticipated return to San Diego, this is his first solo exhibition in America's Finest City since 2000. The recent work conveys an energy that is mature, pensive, and acute. His paintings depict abstraction at its best, saturated with complexity and elegance. Observe any segment of the canvas, and that area alone retains the same intricate quality as the painting's whole. The tradition of abstract expressionism lives on today, evolving and striving in the work of Willy Heeks.

GALLERY INFORMATION:

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Hours: Tue – Fri: 9-5 p.m.

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