



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Carrie Mae Weems, Hank Willis Thomas and N. Dash

Exhibition Dates: January 5 – February 3, 2008

Opening Reception: January 4, 2008, 6 – 8PM

OAKLAND, Calif. – December 31, 2007 – Swarm Gallery is pleased to announce “*We're All In This Together*,” featuring works by Carrie Mae Weems, Hank Willis Thomas and N. Dash.

We're All In This Together features three artists who are reinterpreting history by linking it to a new narrative. **Carrie Mae Weems**, in her series *May Days Long Forgotten*, creates a modern day, turn-of-the-century pastoral that references both the historical and the traditional. Recalling photographic stylings from the nineteenth century in a tableau of portrait-like images, *May Days Long Forgotten* “reminds us that struggle is everyday business, and that revolution is merely about possibility.” At the same time, Weems contends, *May Days Long Forgotten* is a critical examination of who is to be seen and how, as well as about inserting the black presence in the world—asserting it as the norm and not as racial politics. “It is about embracing the breadth of this humanity that comes through this brown skin.”

Up until the 1940s, blacks were largely invisible in consumer advertising and as a marketing group to corporate America. By 1968, the apex of the civil rights era, this position had changed significantly, and it is that year which serves as the point of departure for **Hank Willis Thomas'** eighty-piece series, *Unbranded*. Using print advertisements from 1968 to the present, Thomas removes the original texts and logos, only presenting the figures and characters in the ad. The remaining scenarios—which are at times intriguing, awkward, and absurd—reveal the visual language strategies of the advertisers, as well as the cultural stereotypes upon which they are rooted. By presenting these works, two images for each of the past forty years, Thomas incites the viewer to reflect on how advertising constructs and reinforces stereotypes about African American life, and how the public willingly accepts these images.

In 1830, the population of the American bison was estimated to have been between 30 and 60 million. By 1889, North America's largest land animal, which had freely roamed the Great Plains of the United States and Canada, had been reduced to fewer than a 1,000 head. Largely hunted to extinction by white settlers for their hides, for their meat and, in particular, to destroy the food supply of Native Americans, bison today number fewer than 500,000. In her piece, *Ghosts of the Land* as well as in the Project Space, **N. Dash** reweaves the American bison into the fabric of the United States. Working from small pieces of cotton that she abrades by rolling them between her thumb and fingers, the “bison” that make up the stars and stripes of Dash's American flag are miniature sculptures. But the sculptures, less than intentional and more the result of a process both contemplative and meditative, also serve as hieroglyphs—symbols that represent a disconnect between a generation and its country, its politics, and the foundations of its society.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

EXHIBITION: **WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER**

Carrie Mae Weems, Hank Willis Thomas and N. Dash

DATES: January 5 – February 3, 2008

Swarm Gallery is open to the public Tuesday – Sunday 12 – 6PM
Every First Friday of the month until 9PM and by appointment

ARTISTS

RECEPTION: January 4, 2008, 6 – 8PM

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

PRESS CONTACT and IMAGES

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

Andrea Antonaccio, Associate Director | Tel: 510 839 2787, andrea@swarmstudios.net