

**BERNARD WILLIAMS*****The Nighty-Nite Show*****Solo Exhibition, January 9 – March 1, 2009****Opening reception on Friday, January 9, 2009, 6 – 10 pm, Artist will be present**

Slate Gallery presents *The Nighty-Nite Show* featuring three major works by New York and Chicago artist, Bernard Williams in his first New York solo exhibition. The title alludes to the current dark state of global affairs where wars, economic insecurity and environmental changes have led to “a pervasive sense of fear that reaches far into the psyche”. *Nighty-Nite* is a state of being lost, and our inability to find our way in the darkness leaves us seeking a savior or angel. The artist believes that many of our struggles stem from fear of unknown people-groups, often darker skinned, and misunderstood religious beliefs. The conflicts that have risen are leading many people into a dark disposition, or what Williams calls, “a dark sleep.”

The first work, titled *Night Flight* is a seven-foot paint and glitter on wood wall sculpture that was inspired by the Presidential seal. The artist loosely refers to the winged creature in the center as some kind of heroic figure, perhaps a Bat symbol, like Batgirl or Batman, or a black angel. This night spirit addresses the cosmic world theater and symbolizes one who will lead us out of the darkness. Symbols representing these events and concerns are tattooed around its glistening black circular body and across its large extended glittering wings.

The complexities of global as well as national history and culture are stretched across the wall of the gallery in the second work featured in *The Nighty-Nite Show*. Titled *Buffalo Chart*, it comprises an enormous mural-scale collection of hundreds of symbols that Williams cut out of painted black plywood. Silhouetted representations of weapons, tools, instruments, people working and fighting, animals and words make up this information grid, an ongoing work that has engaged the artist for several years. Recently, a variation of *Buffalo Chart* was exhibited in *REMIX: New Modernities in a Post Indian World*, at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York.

In the third display of the show, Williams has arranged an eclectic collection of small sculptures, objects, and photographs on makeshift shelves. This group of sculpture in various formats was developed from *Buffalo Chart* and *Night Flight*. Most objects are wood-based, but some have metal parts, like the gold steel wings on the box-head sculpture. Some objects lay flat or are stacked between fabric pages. The artist refers to them as history books or bedtime stories and speaks of the stacked display as something possibly found in a collector’s bedroom or in a dark recess of an artist’s studio.

Bernard Williams was born in Chicago in 1964. In addition to working as a sculptor, the artist is also a painter and a muralist. He has received many awards and residencies including Cooper Union, NY, 2006; the Kohler Art Center, WI, 2005; Illinois Arts Council, 2006 and 2004; Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown MA, 2003-04; Artadia Foundation, NY, 2001; and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME, 1987. His work is included in the collections of The Snite Museum of Art, Notre Dame University, IN and the Eiteljorg Museum Indianapolis, IN. The artist currently works in Chicago and New York.

Slate Gallery is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m. and other times by appointment