

Complex.com, 15 de enero de 2010

## PREVIEW: Todd James Talks NYC Show "Make My Burden Lighter"

BY COMPLEX MAG | JAN 15, 2010 | 10:05 PM | PERMALINK



TODD JAMES, *Make My Burden Lighter*, 2010, installation view, Gering & López Gallery, New York, NY.

Tonight, Todd James ([REAS](#)) opens his show, *Make my Burden Lighter*, at [Gering and Lopez Gallery](#) in New York. It is a solo show of original work, and if you live in New York you need to get yourself up there and check it out. Todd took the time to talk us through some of the key pieces, and his inspiration for the new show:

This show "Make my Burden Lighter" is about some of the themes in my recent work global conflicts and economic disasters that have been tied into it and trying to find the finish line to them and maybe finding some humor on the way through it all. As Skeme's mom said in *Style Wars*, "You have to laugh to keep from crying." These are really everyone's burdens, I'm just discussing them visually in my voice.

Hit the jump to check out the art from *Make my Burden Lighter* and the rest of the interview with Todd James about the show, his process, and his inspirations for the new work...



TODD JAMES, *Somali Cargo*, 2010, Gouache & graphite on paper, 15 1/2 x 11 inches, image courtesy of Gering & López Gallery, New York.

**Complex: Are there any methods or tricks you use to get in the mindstate to create, or does it differ?**

Todd James: Ha, yes. Sometimes I'll play music on repeat or in blocks. (When creating for this show), I listened to this band Akitsa and Gram Parsons. Also some Sabbath and Cam'ron in the last few months.

**Complex: What kind of work are you showing?**

Todd James: The paintings I'm showing are new and some of the other work I've shown before, but none of it has been seen in New York. I'm really glad to show them here to people I grew up with and know me. There are no prints for the show, this is original work only. I have two oil paintings on canvas, which new for me, and everything else is gouache on paper with graphite.

**Complex: Besides your own work, are there other artists or work that you go to for inspiration?**

Todd James: Sometimes I pull from my imagination, like the "Leather Boy Grimace" painting, or other times it's from the news. Recently, I've made a few new paintings with more color of the modern day Somali pirates. It's interesting that a few guys can ride out in a speed boat with some used A.K.'s and rocket launcher and just take these huge ships the size of a shopping mall over. There's a Thirstin' Howl lyric, "I'll stick you up with a safety pin or a lit roman candle" - that kind of ingenuity born out of desperation, rigged hope trying to find some justice, is a big theme here.

**Complex: Are there any artists that you follow now?**

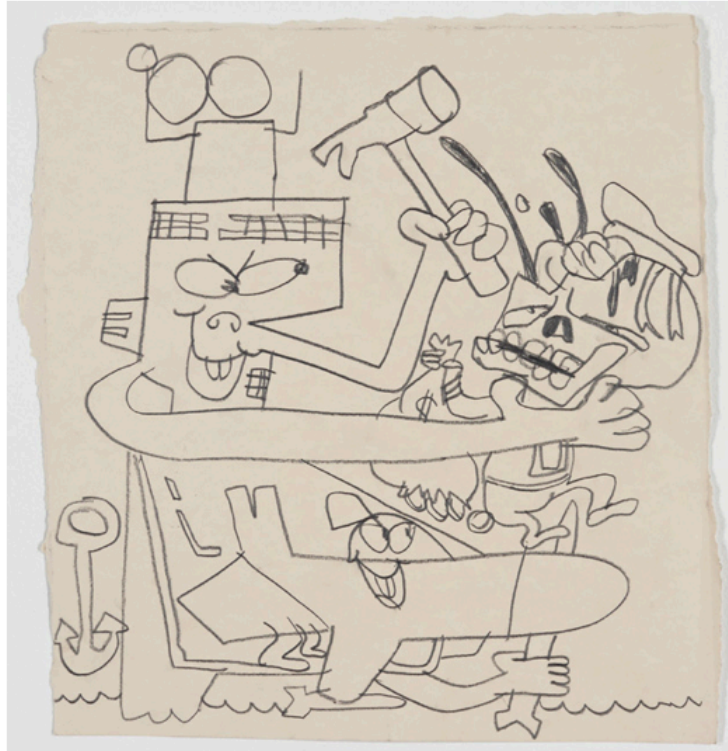
Todd James: I just went to see An [Eddie Martinez](#) show last night. It was outstanding, and I got a great Chris Johanson catalog from Deitch this morning. I like so many artists - Peter Saul, Ghost, Erik Parker, Devin Flynn, Dear Rain Drop, Kaws, Steve Powers, Dash Snow, Barry McGee, Eric Foss... the list goes on. Music inspires me as a driving force in the background though.

*Make my Burden Lighter* is on display through February 20th.

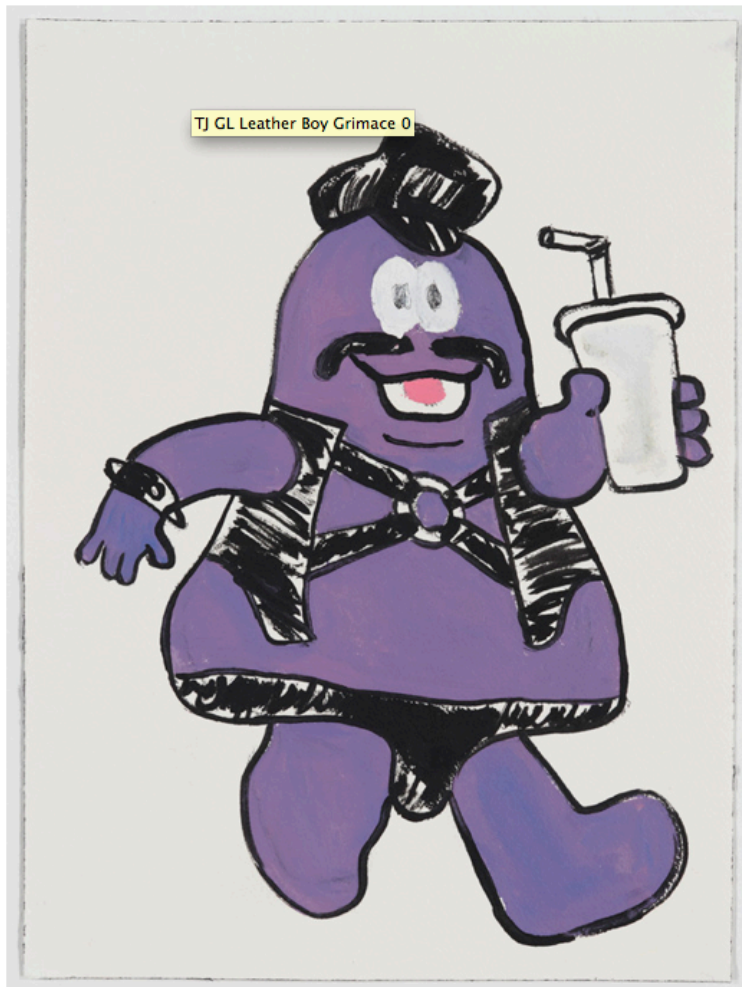
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Between 56th and 57th Streets  
New York, NY 10019  
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TODD JAMES, *The Green Reefer*, 2010, Gouache & graphite on paper, 15 1/2 x 10 inches, Image courtesy of Gering & López Gallery, New York.



TODD JAMES, *Bully with Hammer Beating Sissy*, 2008, Graphite on paper, 15 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches, Image courtesy of Gering & López Gallery, New York.



TODD JAMES, *Leather Boy Grimace*, 2010, Gouache, graphite & marker on paper, 12 1/4 x 9 inches, Image courtesy of Gering & López Gallery, New York.





TODD JAMES, *Red Tanker*, 2010, Gouache & graphite on paper, 22 1/2 x 15 inches, Image courtesy of Gering & Lopez Gallery, New York.



TODD JAMES, *Somali Pirates at Sun Down*, 2010, Gouache & graphite on paper, 74 1/2 x 51 1/2 inches, Image courtesy of Gering & Lopez Gallery, New York.