

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For immediate release: October 26, 2001

RICO GATSON

NOVEMBER 17 – DECEMBER 22

Rico Gatson is an artist who bears an agile kinship with the freestyle spirit, wittily manipulating materials and meanings in his installation art, creating humorous works that nonetheless belie a legacy of racism and (mis) representation in popular culture.

Maria-Christina Villaseñor (*Freestyle* catalogue)

Rico Gatson will present several large-scale video works based on popular Hollywood movies and black exploitation films.

Projected as large as six by eight feet, the DVD videos consist of repeated three-minute loops, each an appropriated scene of recognizable iconography reworked by the artist. Using an array of cinematic editing techniques, Gatson explores the relationship between the clichés of cinema and embedded cultural systems of thinking. Hypnotic and visually arresting, the videos recreate the power of moviemaking while investigating the subtext of what our culture calls entertainment.

In this exhibition, Gatson loosely explores the conventions of film that generally relate to fear. He plays with the idea of Hollywood's demonization of evil in *Arrival*; slow motion softens the muscular reflexes of the Wicked Witch from malice into grief. *Departure*, based on a scene from *Alien*, becomes a metaphor for escape; fast-paced editing combined with the ambient sounds of alarm heightens the nightmarish atmosphere. *Jungle, Jungle*, a kaleidoscopic montage of the ceremonial dance in *King Kong*, references the cultural implications of the fear of being taken against one's will. *Gun Play*, a compilation of *Foxy Brown* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, is a caricature of the action film genre, paralleling the black female heroine with the male Hollywood hero. A fifth video, *Celebration*, in which Gatson reorders two black exploitation films, *The Mack* and *Super Fly*, becomes a counter to the anxieties and tensions conveyed in the other four video works.

Rico Gatson's work will be exhibited in *Masking: Rico Gatson ("Kindred") and Andres Serrano ("Klansman")* at the Atlanta Contemporary Art Gallery, November 16 – January 12, 2002. Recent group exhibitions include *Freestyle* at The Studio Museum in Harlem, traveling to The Santa Monica Museum of Art; *Race and Digital Space* at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Boston; and *Brooklyn!* at the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art.

There will be a reception for the artist on Saturday, November 17th from 6:00 – 8:00. Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, Monday by appointment, 10:00 – 6:00. For information and photographs, contact Amy Bannon at (212) 226-3232 or amy@feldmangallery.com.