

# TALMAN + MONROE

## UNTITLED (BANJI CUNT)

AUGUST 8 - SEPTEMBER 6, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Untitled (Banji Cunt)* is a comprehensive exhibition featuring video and photographic works by Rashaad Newsome. Though mainly a study of Vogueing, *Untitled (Banji Cunt)* is part of an overarching theme in the artist's oeuvre. Newsome's work to date has consistently addressed issues of cultural ownership, cultural signifiers, and what he refers to as "the language of the body".

Vogueing is a highly stylized dance form spawned in the gay Ball culture of New York City in the 1960s and 70s. *Banji Cunt* refers to a style of Vogueing; *banji* is a slang term for something that can be described as *ghetto*, therefore it acts as a double slang. Introduced to the mainstream audience by Jennie Livingston's 1991 documentary *Paris Is Burning*, Vogueing was later popularized by the video for Madonna's hit-single, *Vogue*. In its original incarnation, the dance form borrowed poses from fashion models featured in *Vogue* magazine and deftly blended them with moves derived from ballet, martial arts and yoga.

Each work in the exhibition features Shayne Oliver, one of New York City's top Voguers. The original 8-minute silent loop, its highly polished HD-video counterpart, and the ten film stills all serve to shape a careful and loving visual study of both performer and performance. *Untitled (Study for Banji Cunt)*, 2008, is raw footage taken of Oliver during his first sitting for what would later become the *Untitled (Banji Cunt)* series. For the final video in this particular series, *Untitled*, 2008, Oliver was invited to the artist's studio to be filmed demonstrating different styles of Vogueing. Using the footage filmed in the studio during that session, Newsome connected the shots to form sequences and then connected these sequences to create an 8-minute video. The video was given to the performer to study and elaborate on. *Untitled* is the result of Oliver's reinterpretation of this unique approach to choreography.

In eliminating the aural element of the performance (and thus the force driving Mr. Oliver) in both works, Newsome encourages the spectator to study this at once furious and exceptionally graceful choreographed dance. At times, the camera is still, breathlessly focused on the performance unfolding before us; in other moments, Newsome cuts in closer, drawing us nearer to inspect the performance with him in equal fascination. The comprehensive experience of *Untitled (Banji Cunt)* is truly homage to Vogue culture.

To RSVP for the opening, please contact us at [info@tplusmgallery.com](mailto:info@tplusmgallery.com). As the gallery is a private residence, we prefer the address not be publicly disclosed.