



**FREDERICK HAYES**



Untitled (portrait drawings), 2005  
charcoal, graphite

(left & front cover)  
Cityscape Drawings, 2005  
charcoal, graphite

Untitled (RD 85), 2005  
acrylic on canvas

Untitled (RD 155), 2005  
acrylic on canvas



Untitled (RD 32), 2005  
acrylic on canvas





Throughout the work of Brooklyn artist Frederick Hayes, there is an underlying sense of turbulence. Not the violent turbulence of shifting weather patterns, but the low rumbling of an everpresent passion that is rolling and tumbling within. It is a sensation derived from a combination of subject matter with certain consistency of formal elements and devices that feed themes of blackness, urban existence, the maddening and beautiful rhythm of everyday life, and the circumstance of being human and alive in an unpredictable world.

The turbulence and passion of this humanness is manifest in ways that are emphatically physical, almost muscular. It is a physicality that enhances a sense of immediacy, as though we are repeatedly encountering the ardent emblems that comprise life in the city, whether it is people, architecture, or environment. No matter the subject, Hayes' work often resides in the space between the representational with the abstract, never wholly one or the other. What appear abstract is drawn from specific representations and what appear representational contains sufficient abstracted gestures to enable a looser association of meanings to rise in the work. If the work sometimes hints at socio-political or real world ideas, it simultaneously emits a more ambiguous, emotional tone.

In his portraits of people with the surname Washington, Hayes is realizing multiple allusions at once. The prevalence of the name within the African-American community alludes to a complex entymological past while the manner in which the portraits are often displayed—expressionless, ganged together as a grid—touches upon the equally desultory allusion to mugshots. The quantity of these portraits imparts a strong sense of a race of people, while the manner in which they are each depicted illustrates the specific individuality within the group.

The dependable predictability of portraiture—all faces rendered in fairly equal manner—enables us to sense the abstract patterning, the gentle turbulence, that percolates within Hayes' work. The angular turns of head and the degrees of shading seem simplified at first glance, but when viewed together, we can more clearly see the subtle differences between the portraits. There may be broad similarities, but no two are alike.

This persistent insertion of abstracted qualities to works that otherwise might remain representational is a continuous thread in Hayes' work and operates in both directions. The wooden skyline of *Height Restrictions* is recognizable as a skyline, but is not rendered so realistically that we fail to see it also as a three-dimensional line of abstracted forms. Drawing it out as a long, abstracted line provides an allusion to the urban environment as a seemingly endless and variable landscape. *Demo-Graphics*, by comparison, is basically abstract, a graph of unidentified information, but it is impossible not to see the skyline that the graphs collectively comprise. At the same time, both works also suggest the mechanics of power relationships—"height restrictions" is a city planning term that refers to parameters established for limiting and defining urban growth, while the graphs suggest a process of measurement and categorization, the implications of which shift based on who is doing the measuring.

The cityscape drawings display that impulsive randomness of the urban environment, a landscape than can contain surprises even within the conventional patterns of

grids and boxes. This notion is enhanced by the abstracted elements in the cityscapes. They are slightly askew in the manner of the Washington portraits—we recognize the images as buildings, but there remains a sense that they are on the cusp of dissolving into pure form, pure emotive abstraction, and this further feeds our notion of this landscape as uncertain as it is exciting.

Topped as the cityscapes often are by a heavy cluster of clouds, they can also appear ominous. They are imbued with the psychological residue of urban fear, which is no longer an ambiguous, inchoate, undefinable thing. Post-Oklahoma City, post-9/11, post-Katrina, we understand too deeply the varying shades of danger implicit in these environments. If it is realm of potential danger, Hayes' renditions of this landscape also make his subject appear romanticized, revealing a persistent, erotic edge to these same images. If we are made to feel trepidation within ourselves, we are also made to feel the seductive magneticism with which this environment attracts us. Within the cold-seeming grid structure is the heat of a heart that draws us near.

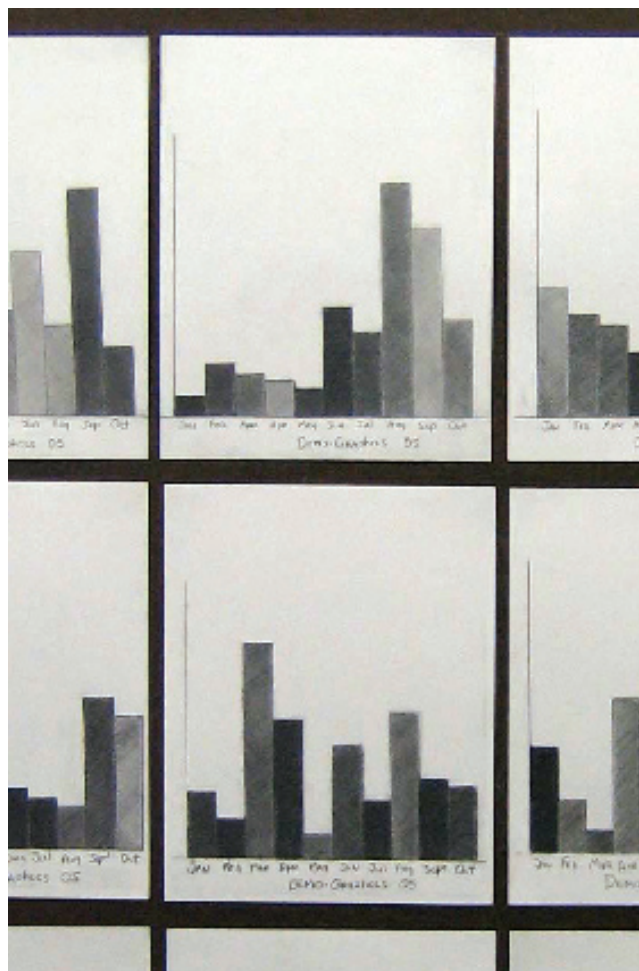
In this context, it is not surprising that Hayes' has also produced a series of paintings depicting various styles of automobile radiators. Formally, they mimic the urban grid, but their tough exterior structure serves mostly to move energy around, to attract us, to draw us to them. They are curious, impersonal objects, but Hayes gives each of them a particular identity, as though they are serving as metaphors for the passionate individual situated in a complex but alluring environment. They, like ourselves, require a certain quantity of internal sustenance to operate.

Across the various radiator paintings, we continue to feel the fluid motion between abstraction and representation evidenced throughout Hayes' work, including his more recent video loops. A sense of repetition and regularity that is nonetheless constantly in flux, constantly enduring some small measure of change and adaptation. There is something innately human about this: the ebb and flow of the individual within the group, the individual within his environment, fear tempered by seduction, things with a cold indifferent

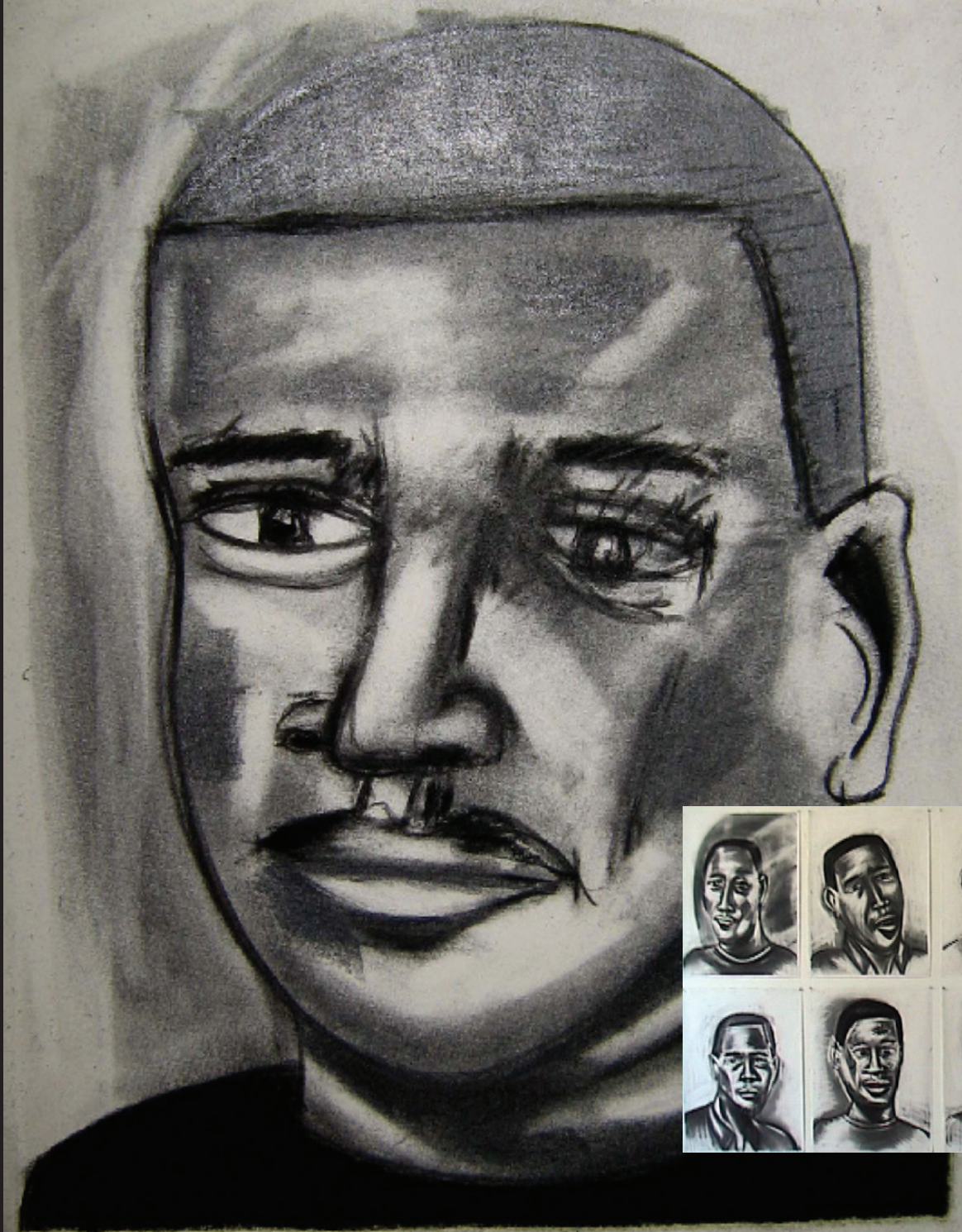
exterior propelled by the heat of their internal combustion, sameness and banality revealed as full of unexpected wildness.

A passionate turbulence.

John Massier  
Visual Arts Curator



*Demo-Graphics*, 2005  
charcoal, graphite



*The Washington*, 2004  
charcoal, graphite

*Untitled*  
(portrait drawings), 2004  
charcoal, graphite





*Height Restrictions, 2006*  
wood

FREDERICK HAYES • June 10 to July 15, 2006

Frederick Hayes received his BFA and MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in the mid-eighties where upon he began his professional career. Working with a variety of media including charcoal, acrylic, found material, cut-steel and using an installation format his early work consisted of portraits of African Americans within the predominately black community of Western Addition in San Francisco. Armed with a camera he would walk the streets of that community ask it's citizens to posed for him go back to the studio and construct drawings, paintings and sculpture that ultimately became composites of those individual instead of an exact representation. In 1997 he got is first opportunity to show these portraits in the first "Bay Area Now" after one of the curators saw the work in a local non-profit gallery "The Luggage Store". Since that time he has exhibited has nationally at the Drawing Center, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Addison Gallery of American Art, and the San Francisco of Modern Art. Mr. Hayes has also been the recipient of numerous awards, worked on public projects and participated in Artist Residencies such as the Headlands Center for Arts in Marin California and MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH. In June of 2006 he will present a new body of work at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center based on is continuing and ongoing series of image's that references portraiture, the urban experience and the African American vernacular.



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



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