

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FEBRUARY 10, 2010

Media contact: Charlie James
charlie@cjamesgallery.com
213.687.0844

Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition:

Travis Somerville: *A Portion of That Field...*

February 27 – April 17, 2010

Artist's Reception: Saturday February 27, 2010 6-9pm



Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition **Travis Somerville: *A Portion of That Field...*** opening to the public on Saturday, February 27, with a reception for the artist from 6pm-9pm; on view through April 17.

This show contains work from Somerville's museum show in late 2009 at the Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, entitled *Dedicated to the Proposition*. In concert with the LA opening @ Charlie James, Somerville will be opening an exhibition on the 20th of February at the Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco entitled *Rededicated to the Proposition*. Each gallery will have roughly half the work from the museum show at Otis.

A Portion of That Field... is a solo exhibition of San Francisco based artist Travis Somerville organized by Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. The exhibition presents a new body of work including painting, drawing, sculpture and installation. The exhibition title refers to Abraham Lincoln's historic *Gettysburg Address* delivered during the Civil War: "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this." In this speech, Lincoln asks the nation to honor its fallen by challenging its citizens to fully realize and achieve "...a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

With this body of work, Somerville explores the complex inheritance of a nation trying to live up to Lincoln's challenge of being a nation not divided, but truly "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." The artist is interested in investigating the tension and contradiction in America's realization of equality and freedom for all between the numerous examples of the nation's success manifest in Obama's election and first 100 days and the nation's failure evidenced by the enduring and shameful aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Travis Somerville was born in 1963 in Atlanta, Georgia to white civil rights activists—an Episcopal priest and a school teacher, and grew up in various cities and rural towns throughout the Southern United States. The geography of his upbringing is important - growing up in the south during the 1960s, a period of immense social upheaval, has deeply informed the narrative content of his work. His work simultaneously tries to reconcile his own Southern Christian upbringing and the tumultuous racial politics of 60s with the more progressive but better concealed racial divisions of today.

Somerville studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and at the San Francisco Art Institute. Select solo exhibitions include *Another Song of the South* at University of Georgia, Athens; *American Cracker Too* at Alfred C. Glassell Jr. Exhibition Gallery, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and *New Work* at University of Houston, Texas. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions including the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition *In the Spirit of Martin Luther King: the Living Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, *Whiteness: A Wayward Construction* at the Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California, and *Lincoln: Man, Myth, and Memory* at the Amistad Center for Art and Culture in Hartford, Connecticut. His work is included in the permanent collections of the di Rosa Preserve: Art & Nature, the Achenbach Collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Laguna Art Museum, and the San Jose Museum of Art, among others. He has garnered critical attention in numerous publications including *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, *Kitchen Sink*, and *The Washington Post*.

Image Detail: Travis Somerville, *Sing Out America*, 2009. Oil and collage on canvas with plaster casts 91 x 84 x 16 ½ inches

Location: Charlie James Gallery – 975 Chung King Road, Los Angeles CA 90012

Hours: Wed-Sat 12-6 and Sunday 12-5

Gallery Info: 213.687.0844, info@cjamesgallery.com, <http://www.cjamesgallery.com>

Next Show: ORLY COGAN – Love Street – APRIL 24 – JUNE 20, 2010