

BROADWAY

Al Freeman
Room Service
January 3 - February 1

Broadway is pleased to announce *Room Service* a solo exhibition of new sewn-vinyl wall sculptures by New York artist Al Freeman. Presented in collaboration with 56 Henry, this is the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

Beginning with the signature motif of Beethoven's 5th Symphony, an ominous knock at the door represented here as crumpled fragments of torn sheet music, the show traverses the scattered detritus of a hotel room, both glamorous and base. Conceived as a decadent, sullen hibernation against winter and other creeping discontents, Freeman presents a sequence of beds strewn with coins, newspapers, a TV remote, spent solo cups and drained bottles of Jaegermeister alongside tableaux of fallen leaves, lost love-notes and fading flowers. The black and white of bathroom tiles become chessboards of discarded flotsam that invites forensic reconstruction of narrative. The cumulative effect encompasses scatter art, still-life and landscape painting, Pop and Minimalism, Matisse cutouts, and Picassoid bricolage all befitting Freeman's deep knowledge, and persistent poking at art history.

Structurally, Freeman emerges from a sculpture tradition that includes the obvious referent of Claes Oldenburg, but is perhaps better understood in a lineage of Sturtevant's remakes of that artist's early soft sculpture. A general tenor of negativity and slightly malicious irony pervades Freeman's work, one that is unconcerned with supposedly proprietary methodology, and moves beyond pastiche into territory that is unencumbered by the welter of influence.

A more telling inspiration for the show's mood is Wallace Stevens' "Domination of Black" from 1916. The poem weaves a spell of creeping dread against quotidian details, emphasizing the false-safety of hearth and home against the onslaught of outside forces, natural and manmade.

*At night, by the fire,
The colors of the bushes
And of the fallen leaves,
Repeating themselves,*

BROADWAY

Turned in the room,

Like the leaves themselves

Turning in the wind.

Yes: but the color of the heavy hemlocks

Came striding.