



PICTURED, left to right: *Balances that Happen*, 2007, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 80" x 64", \$12,500, and *Heavy Chalk*, 2007, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 80" x 60", \$12,500

## ARTIST PROFILE

An interview with Mixed Greens artist Rob Nadeau in his Brooklyn, New York studio

**MG:** How would you like viewers to respond to abstraction in your paintings?

**RN:** I like to think that people can inhabit the paintings – that they can become a part of them, fall into the picture and have some type of visceral experience. That's part of why I am interested in making larger scale pieces. I'm interested in creating a space that is open and where the viewer is free to create their own story.

**MG:** In addition to your work's characteristic line, color, and texture, what can we look forward to seeing in your upcoming show (April 2008) at Mixed Greens?

**RN:** Well, now there is some text and some collaged elements like tape and cardboard and vinyl. There is much less of a focus on organized, pre-planned compositions. The paintings are more spontaneous, raw and exposed. I see them as low-fi, low-tech renderings of high impact situations that sort of slide or fall across the canvas.

**MG:** Why the inclusion of text in some paintings?

**RN:** It just sort of emerged out of my process, like it was the unavoidable next step, so I went with it to see what would happen and I liked the result. It allows for another avenue of communication and experience and opens me up to alternate relationships with mark-making. The text I am using is found text so in a way it acts for me just like another element in the painting. I'm fascinated by the fact that the words have had a life before in another context with a very specific meaning.

**MG:** How do you decide when a painting is finished, or for that matter, when works for a show are complete?

**RN:** I guess lately I have been telling myself to stop before I think they are finished. I am a little suspicious of my own sense of resolution. I want to avoid fussiness and this business of cleaning things up so that they are "presentable." So if I find myself saying "it just needs this or that and then it will be finished," I pack it in right then and there and call it quits. Sort of like a freeze-frame in mid-process, which suggests that it could just keep going, that there is a continuum.

**MG:** Are you influenced by any other art disciplines?

**RN:** Recently I have been drawn more to sculpture, or that space where painting and sculpture meet. I've been looking at people like James Hyde, Gedi Sibony, Isa Genzken, early Rauschenberg. I tend to think as much in sculptural terms as in painterly ones when making my paintings. My process is both additive and subtractive and I am constantly over-painting and re-painting and taking away in order to pull an image out of the canvas. The paintings are like half-finished constructions, images that are built, so I've been relating to work that addresses those types of issues.

**MG:** What inspires your visual language? What sources do you draw upon?

**RN:** I've always been drawn to graphic design, signage, underground poster art, industrial sites, fashion and architecture. Also refuse and detritus, the stuff our culture throws away – the waste. Basically, I'm interested in the visual culture and commercial residue that surrounds us in our everyday lives. The history of abstract painting is a big inspiration, as is music. Recently I have been listening to a lot of old blues field recordings, improvisational psych rock and early Brian Eno.

**MG:** You recently co-curated a show of abstract works in Berlin. Would you tell us more about your interest in curating works of other artists, or the curatorial process in general?

**RN:** I love meeting new people and new artists and I love looking at work and talking about work. I seem to just automatically curate shows in my head. I get interested in something new and that in turn makes me aware of other people doing similar things and then I think about bringing it all together. But it is also an extension of my own vision, of how I see art and what I think is important and what I think people need to see. It's interesting to see also how art changes in its various contexts, how its meaning or appearance can change when surrounded by other types of work.

**MG:** If you had not become a painter, what would you be?

**RN:** There is no other choice.