

Donald Moffett

"Mr. Gay in the USA"

9 November – 14 December, 2001

Artist Reception: Friday, November 9th, 6-8pm

Anthony Meier Fine Arts is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition of new work by New York artist Donald Moffett. The show is comprised of new paintings and drawings; the core of Moffett's exhibition being a group of courtroom drawings depicting the trial and sentencing of Ronald Gay.

A Vietnam veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and abused alcohol, Ronald Gay resented the homosexual community for "changing the definition of his last name from 'happy' to 'homosexual'." Describing himself as a Christian soldier, Gay entered The Backstreet Café, a busy gay bar in Roanoke, Virginia, on Friday, September 22, 2000, and opened fire on the crowd, wounding six and killing one. Quickly apprehended, Gay later pled guilty to one count of first-degree murder, six counts of aggravated malicious wounding and seven firearms charges.

Donald Moffett sat in the courtroom audience for Ronald Gay's sentencing on July 23, 2001. The artistic result of this trip is a powerful group of seventeen drawings, fifteen double-page spreads and two singles, sparse in form yet heavy in content. The imagery is fairly wide open, single graphite forms in the center of a white page. The paper is neither transparent nor opaque and, as most pages were drawn on both sides, many drawings feature a ghost image shining through from the backside. Completing each image on site, in rapid succession, Moffett succeeds in making his work spontaneous. The drawings resonate the present. They have a sense of urgency indicative not only of the environment in which they were drawn but also of the absurd tragedy that inspired them.

Exhibiting in San Francisco for the first time, Moffett's debut show is a completion of the sinister circle begun by Ronald Gay. Gay considered San Francisco to be the "(homosexuals') city" and stated that "(homosexual) meeting places and bars will be destroyed...if they don't move...there (to San Francisco)." Moffett's drawings are his own memorial to those who lost something at The Backstreet Café.