



**William Betts :: Surveillance**

**January 9 – February 13**

**For Immediate Release: 11/24/09** - Holly Johnson Gallery in Dallas is pleased to announce the opening of *Surveillance* an exhibition of recent paintings by William Betts. A reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, January 9th from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

William Betts is an artist who thrives on the appropriation of digital technology. For the past several years Betts has been interested in video images captured by the ubiquitous surveillance camera.

Some of the imagery in *Surveillance* is captured from Texas Department of Transportation cameras that Betts has licensed from the Department to use as the subject of paintings. Betts refers to these paintings as landscapes, the highway being the primary contemporary vantage point from which most Americans experience the landscape. Betts spends hours pouring over footage to select frames that he finds interesting. Other imagery is of public and private spaces, such as parking lots and motels, also derived from surveillance video. These ambiguous images invite the viewer to infer whatever narrative he or she likes. Betts avoids overt sensationalism - crimes and accidents are not shown. But the very mundane nature of the scenes serves as a reminder that the promise of security offered by surveillance technology also comes at the price of privacy.

For the last ten years Betts has focused his practice on software-controlled processes he developed for applying paint. The paintings in this exhibition are made up of thousands of individually applied drops of paint that replicate the pixels of the digital images Betts uses as his source material. Though automated, the technique is exacting and time consuming and any given painting may contain up to 100,000 individually applied drops of paint.

In 2009 Betts was included in exhibitions in Albuquerque, Chicago, Vancouver, and Houston. His work has also been shown recently in group exhibitions including *Invisible Omniscience: Seeing and the Seen* at the Baltimore Art Place, *New American Talent 23* at Arthouse in Austin, TX, *Under Surveillance* at the John Michael Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan, WI, *The Sky is Falling* at Spur Projects in Portolo Valley, CA and many others. In 2008 he won First Place at the Assistance League of Houston Celebrates Texas Art, Juried by Dr. Kevin Salatino of LACMA, was a finalist for the 2008 Hunting Art Prize and was included in the Texas Biennial in Austin in 2005 and 2007. Recent articles on his work include reviews in San Antonio Express-News, Artlies, Glasstire, Houston Chronicle, Houston Press, Albuquerque Tribune, Chicago Tribune and Chicago Reader.

William Betts was born and raised in New York City. In 1991 he graduated from Arizona State University Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He currently lives in Houston.

Holly Johnson Gallery is located at 1411 Dragon Street in Dallas. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The gallery is a member of Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas. For info call 214-369-0169, or visit [www.hollyjohnsongallery.com](http://www.hollyjohnsongallery.com).