

ARTCRITICAL PICK: Clintel Steed at Steven Harvey



Clintel Steed, *When Dreams Happen*, 2016. Oil on masonite, 48 x 48 inches.

A dozen years ago I wrote a letter of recommendation for Clintel Steed who was applying for a fancy residency somewhere (I don't recall if he got it or not.) I find, checking my files, that my verdict on his student work applies as forcefully to what he is doing now. Not that I'm suggesting stagnation in his development: on the contrary, he is a painter who never fails to astound me with his energy and ambition: "Clintel Steed's work fuses a deep and original understanding of the formal complexities of picture organization with a fresh, intuitive, emotive sense of narrative. This marriage of the plastic and the personal gives his work its particular intensity and edge." In contrast to the three other paintings that power Steven Harvey's front parlor, which are busier, denser, slower-reading pictures that take their cues from old master painting and the news cycle, the enigmatic portrait featured in "When Dreams Happen" is a kind of Invisible Man for the Internet age, with a visage that looks like a cross between an African mask and a pair of whirling fan blades rotating in opposite directions, a face formation of hieratic menace and tender vulnerability. DAVID COHEN

Clintel Steed, *Endymion* on view at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects through October 9, 208 Forsyth Street, between Houston and Stanton streets.