

ARTFORUM

DENVER

Adam Helms

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

August 12, 2008–January 18, 2009

Curated by Cydney Payton

New York–based artist Adam Helms approaches the romantic subjects of revolution and the American West with an ethnographer's eye. His drawings, gouaches, and photographic appropriations have “documented” both nineteenth-century landscapes and soldiers on the fringe: American Civil War guerrillas, Chechen rebels, Al Qaeda, and Helms's own fictional New Frontier Army. In *Untitled (48 Portraits)*, 2006, the artist's ink renderings of balaclavas and hoods are displayed as a Becheresque typological grid, while his sculptures serve as “artifacts” of a militarized dystopia. For his first major solo museum exhibition—an installation of new works on paper and a large-scale assemblage—Helms's radical archetypes will underscore the proposition that history repeats itself. His political source material has not been lost on Cydney Payton, who mounts this show when the Democratic National Convention comes to town.

—Nicole Lanctot