

ALMINE RECH

JUXTAPOZ
Art & Culture

**The Heat Lets us Know We're Alive:
Vaughn Spann Opens A Solo Show @
Almine Rech, NYC**

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Following intuition and experience, Spann delves into artmaking that explores the variety of ventures he experiences as a friend, father, husband and citizen of the world. With this impetus, he creates figurative work as a commentary on day-to-day life and personal encounters, as well as conceptual work with a focus on materials and technique. His abstract work typically features an X mark, seemingly buried inside burnt or frozen textures and surfaces, questioning the symbol's impact and meaning. Whether referencing the graphics of a once-popular sci-fi series or the influential American Muslim minister and social-rights activist, Malcolm X, Spann's conceptual works invites close inspection of the layers of nuance.

The Heat Lets us Know We're Alive, to some extent, explores the theory of language journalist Mark Rappolt described as "a social construction, (which) changes according to who you are, with whom you are conversing and according to all the experiences they have accumulated, changes through history, changes with geography, and changes according to context." This is underscored in the Symbiotic paintings, works the artist began in his first year at Yale. Originating with the idea of bestowing more awareness to his work by adding a second head, these images are profound and offer strata of interpretation, much like the language itself. Addressing social, economic, political and historical issues through a subtle use of symbols, gestures and color choice, Vaughn tip toes into conversations that otherwise might feel assertive, biased or even creepy. –Sasha Bogojev