



**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

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HAPPY SMILERS

DUTY-FREE SHOPPING

**AN INSTALLATION BY NARI WARD
MARCH 7 TO APRIL 6 1996**

OPENING RECEPTION MARCH 7, 6:00PM TO 8:00PM

Happy Smilers, an ambitious installation by Nari Ward, opens on March 7, 1996, at Deitch Projects. The work reflects the overlapping of Ward's experience as a child growing up in Jamaica and as an artist working in Harlem. The title of the exhibition, *Happy Smilers*, comes from the title of an album of island music that features the artist's uncle as lead vocalist. Ward will be creating his own space inside the gallery, using the walls, floor and ceiling. The entrance to the gallery will be camouflaged as a duty-free store. Island music will be playing, recalling the innocence that the artist associates with his childhood in Jamaica in the 1960s and 1970s. In the main gallery, Ward will construct a contemplative space of urban detritus. The space will be converted into a kind of ruined home furnishings store, with all of the merchandise tied down with firehose. A pair of fire escapes hanging from the ceiling will evoke a sense of spiritual transcendence. Ward renders both the social and spiritual aspects of his experience. There is always a sense of regeneration

coming through his distressed materials.

Ward abstracts from personal experience when creating his works. He creates enormous structures out of discarded materials that he finds in the street. His structures are not just images to see; they are to be experienced. His sculptures are to be walked through, listened to, and smelled, as well as to be viewed. His installations require an astonishing amount of physical labor and one is awed by the extraordinary amount of work that goes into them. One senses that the labor leads to transcendence rather than exhaustion.

Happy Smilers will be Nari Ward's first solo exhibition in a commercial gallery. Ward has previously exhibited at the 1995 Whitney Biennial, the Aperto section of the 1993 Venice Biennale, at Le Magasin in Grenoble, at the Kroller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, and at the New Museum in New York. He presented his work, *Amazing Grace*, last year in an abandoned firehouse in Harlem.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SARAH WATSON AT DEITCH PROJECTS
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