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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 16 – November 15, 2008 | Reception: Thursday, October 16, 6 – 8 pm

SYLVAN LIONNI *Before the Flood*

For his first solo exhibition at Freight + Volume, New York-based Sylvan Lionni will present a series of “solar panel” paintings. These new works act as an extension of the artist’s fascination with the aesthetic and conceptual properties inherent within the banal objects of everyday life, an idea revisited throughout Lionni’s many bodies of work.

Appropriating the forms of industrial articles and stripping them of their utilitarian purpose is a strategy Lionni has been employing for years - faded American flag stickers, lotto tickets and computer keypads – Lionni translates these sources into his own lineage of dead-pan picture making. His expertly crafted hard-edged works display a labor-intensive painting process. They retain a deceptive but devout allegiance to the handmade despite their machine-like effects, rendered with alternative materials and non-traditional painting methods.

Lionni’s solar panel and the artist’s process in general sit anxiously between abstraction and representation. Re-contextualizing forms and imagery that subscribe to a specific painterly means, Lionni thereby spawns a new brand of “conceptual abstraction”.

“The paintings’ purpose as objects for consideration is reinforced merely by their being indoors; the natural habitat for most painting is the last place an actual solar panel can do its job. Out of direct sunlight and sheltered from the elements, the impostor panels are subject to the peculiar scrutiny we offer to art.

By being placed in an aestheticized context, they point up the fact that the most conventional opposition to solar energy has been aesthetic; the high-tech appearance of solar collectors doesn’t mesh with the pre-modern architectural forms that, even in bastardized fashion, continue to shape most contemporary building. In the wake of the industrial revolution, the production and consumption of energy were driven apart—largely owing to the offense given by production to the eye, ear, or nose—and energy became invisible, a kind of magic known only through its effects. Sylvan’s unique brand of conceptual abstraction pushes the image of energy production back in front of us. He demands that we see how the trick is done.” - Excerpted from “Daylight Saving Time” by Glen Dixon, 2008.

Sylvan Lionni received his MFA from Bard College, NY and BA from SVA, NY. His solo exhibitions include Rebecca Ibel Gallery, Columbus, OH; Fusebox, Washington, DC and Rome Arts, Brooklyn, NY. Born in Cuckfield, England, he currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

For more information, please visit the gallery’s website or contact Nick Lawrence (Owner/Director), Steven Stewart (Director) or Kadar Brock (Gallery Manager) at 212.989.8700 or info@freightandvolume.com.