



A.M. Richard Fine Art • 328 Berry Street, 3rd floor • Brooklyn, NY 11211
www.amrichardfineart.com • tel: (917) 570-1476 • gallery@amrichardfineart.com

For immediate release.

A Contemporary Bestiary: a selection of art works by Meredith Allen, Andrew Garn, Jude Hughes, Elisabeth Kley, Ann Murphy, Carol Saft, Jessica Weiss and Martin Wilson.

On view September 11th – October 11th, 2009

Artist's reception: September 11th, 6-9pm

This exhibition is located in the gallery Project Room.

The Bestiary is an established natural history based on the Greek *Physiologus* – in medieval times it rivaled in popularity with the bible. Today, as with numerous ancient texts, it is all but forgotten.

The idea for a group exhibition on the theme of the bestiary came from leafing through facsimile books on medieval illuminated manuscripts of Spanish and French origins. Curiously rendered animals are often depicted to illustrate text and within the margins of the pages. This may be attributed to the artist's lack of first hand knowledge of the animal's physiognomy, the result of self-taught artistic manner or simply of a mind's vivid imagination. Thoughts of monks dedicated to their craft arduously working in assumed silence and isolation made me question studio environment and the various processes involved in creating art.

The artist presented in this group exhibition seemingly have nothing in common. Perhaps the only aspect that binds them as a group is an obsessive dedication to their craft and the creation of their own private mythology. Each of the artist presented in Bestiary works alone in the privacy of their studio or, in the case of photographers, shoot on their habitual solitary plein-air promenades. I have asked each artist in this exhibition to submit a work evocative of an animal, a rock or a landscape. The allotted gallery space would take the role of a 3-dimensional and oversize contemporary bestiary page.

Carol Saft presents if it were so, a floor to ceiling paper scroll depicting repeated variations on casket carrying hares. The long scroll format is reminiscent of precepts of Asian art where poetic content and frugality of line is prized– factors taken into account by Ms. Saft. The lowermost end of the Saft scroll rests in a modified oak library card catalog drawer–perhaps a reference to the repository and beginning of all source material for scholarly research. Akin to a card catalog, the scroll necessitates manipulation to view in its entirety. Ms. Saft has created a mysterious reading object subject to numerous layers of interpretation.

Ann Murphy exhibits a large drawing with a composition of an undulating herd of buffalos. Part figurative part abstract, the seemingly calm animals nervously push one another into a mass. Ultimately they are crushed and disappear within the limitation of the paper's edge.

Jessica Weiss' intricate painting illustrates a dense and lush forest. Looking through the maze of foliage and thick application of paint, one discovers a timid rendition of a standing fawn. Ms. Weiss' compositions are laboriously worked and at quick glance deceptively naive. One of the pleasures derived from a Weiss painting stems from visually unraveling its multiple layers. The conclusion of which may lead to the discovery of a surprising narrative.

The ceramic peacock presented by Elisabeth Kley is both a technical tour-de-force and a testimony to ornithological magnificence. Ms. Kley is interested in the transfigurative qualities of man–the peacock's theatrical courtship performance paired with his distinctive dramatic cries is an appropriate metaphor for the tapestry of human behavior.

Jude Hughes has carved whales from discarded ailanthus tree trunks collected in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, an area comprising the estuary of Newtown Creek. Once home to whale oil industries followed by the settlement of petroleum oil refineries, Newtown Creek today, due to accrued waste spillage, is the most polluted waterway in the US. At a primary level, the Hughes whales are symbolic in that they bridge the region's past to the present.

Meredith Allen questions assumed perceptions of innocence in the portraiture of children's street coin operated mechanical rides. Kiddie Ride #62, is an haunting and subtly distorted close-up of a pony's head. The artist has succeeded in peeling away the animal's inviting grin. The moment captured is disturbing, it appears we are now looking at a ghoulish skull.

Observations Week 35 is the result of Andrew Garn's photographic study for the 35th week of the calendar year. Applying a scientific approach to photography, Mr. Garn exhibits abstract renderings of dogs, feathers and spiders. Mr. Garn is a documentary photographer. He was most recently awarded an artist residency at Zion National Park (Utah). Mr. Garn has been invited by the US embassy in Russia to exhibit his photographs in 2010.

In A Message from The Bears, Martin Wilson's conceptual photograph illustrates a sentence formed by letters found on concrete pavement breaks-the phrase reads *Don't Step on the Cracks*. In explaining his work Mr. Wilson wrote to me from London where he lives: *It seems not everyone knows this, but hiding round street corners there are bears, standing waiting and watching. And should you be careless with your tread and step on a crack in the pavement, they jump out and get you! At least that's what I was told and that's what I've told my children*. Mr. Wilson most recently exhibited at The Royal Academy of Art.

The opening of the exhibition will take place Friday September 11th from 6-9pm. The exhibition will be on view through October 11th.

Please contact A.M. Richard at (917) 570-1476 or gallery@amrichardfineart.com for more information. Gallery hours are Friday through Sunday from 1pm until 6pm.