

Press Release

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The Palo Alto Art Center Announces...

Winter 2009 Exhibitions / January 23- April 26, 2009

TALES FROM AN IMAGINARY MENAGERIE & JOE BRUBAKER: SOMNAMBULISTS

~Public preview, Thursday, January 22, 2009, 5:30- 7:30 pm~

PALO ALTO, Calif. – November 25, 2008 – Among the offerings in the Palo Alto Art Center's two Winter/Spring exhibitions are fabulist constructions that visually blur the boundaries between abstraction and realist representation in *Joe Brubaker:* Somnambulists and between animal and man in *Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie.*

The polychrome figures in *Joe Brubaker: Somnambulists* have an inward gaze and striking iconic frontality, as if perpetually suspended in dream states. The Bay Area sculptor's work triggers the memory of *Santos*—the hand-carved figures of colonial Latin America and New Mexico that depict saints, angels, or other



Joe Brubaker, *Henry*, 2005, Douglas Fir, Poplar, acrylic, Courtesy of the Artist

religious figures. Brubaker's contemporary figures, however, go beyond motifs of the traditional genre in their melding of realistic details with strongly reductive, abstract elements. Their appeal derives from the artist's sensitive carving and the sense of human history evoked by materials that range from reclaimed wood from old bridges to worn, peeling metal.

The exhibition, which is presented on the occasion of the publication *Somnambulists*, features influential pieces from private collections and the artist's own holdings, preparatory drawings, and exemplary tools that impart particular character to his figures.

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Masami Teraoka, *LA Sushi Ghost Tales /Fish Woman and the Artist I*," 1979, Watercolor on paper, 13 ½ x 55", Collection of Brian Pawlowski, Courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie explores current directions in contemporary art in which artists have created imaginary hybrid animals or mined the subject of animals in an anthropomorphic territory usually reserved for publications for children. These directions may revisit the wide realm of imagination identified with 19th century cabinets of wonder, reflect the artist's political strategies for statements on science or gender, or be a mechanism for compelling narratives or delving into investigations of the inner psyche. The blurring of the boundaries between human and animal manifests our culture's projection of human attributes in our companion creatures and adoption of animal attributes in human activities, ranging from athletic contest to claiming sexual identity.

Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie features drawings, sculpture, photography, tapestry, and video by Randy Bolton, Ria Brodell, John Casey, Adam Chapman, Timothy Cummings, Walton Ford, Justin Gibbens, Scott Greene, Julie Heffernan, Laurie Hogin, Anthony Diaz Hope and Laurel Roth, Misako Inaoka, Nina Katchadourian, Margot Quan Knight, Philip Knoll, Walter Robinson, John Slepian, Deth P. Sun, Kevin E. Taylor, Masami Teraoka, Donald Roller Wilson, and Yuka Yamaguchi. In collaboration with the exhibition Natural Blunders at the de Saisset Museum in Santa Clara University [http://www.scu.edu/de Saisset], Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin.

Create imaginary beings. . .

The exhibition *Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie* features a hands-on drawing project appropriate for all ages in the exhibition.

"Sculpture Family Day" on April 5, 2009, 2-4 pm, features projects to create magical wooden beings.

More Imaginary Beings- Free Family Flick series Supported by Michael Dreyfus Properties & Sherry Bucolo

Spirited hybrid animals and mythical creatures are the subjects of three family-friendly films. Free to the public. Space is limited and reservations are advised. Phone 650-329-2366. Location: Art Center Auditorium.

Sunday, March 15, 3 pm The Cat Returns, (2002), G, 75 minutes

Sunday, March 22, 3 pm The Last Unicorn (1982), G, 93 minutes

Sunday, April 12, 3 pm The Secret of Roan Inish (1994) PG, 102 minutes

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Laurie Hogin Lovelorn Bunny, 2008, Oil on panel Diptych: 12 x 12" each, Collection of Jacquie Littlejohn, Courtesy of Littlejohn Contemporary, New York



Adult Tours for

"Tales from an Imaginary Menagerie" and "Joe Brubaker: Somnambulists"
Free docent-led tours "Art Dialogues" on Saturdays at 2:00 pm. For Confirmation or additional information, please call 650.329.2366.

Reception and Public Preview: free to the public

The Palo Alto Art Center hosts a public preview and reception of the exhibition on January 22 from 5:30- 7:30 pm.

About the Palo Alto Art Center

The Palo Alto Art Center (founded 1971) is a nationally acclaimed, regional visual art center whose exhibition program focuses on documenting – and celebrating – the art and artists of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Center's mission is to foster creative process and thought by forging a greater appreciation and understanding of the visual arts through exhibitions, studio experiences and related educational programs. The Palo Alto Art Center, Division of Arts and Culture, City of Palo Alto, is funded in part by support from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation and the Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council. The Center is open to the public without charge from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday; and 7-10 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday. The Center is located at 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303. For further information: Phone: 650-329-2366 / E-mail: artcenter@cityofpaloalto.org / Website: www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter