

KINSEY/DESFORGES

-IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

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RYAN McLENNAN: FROM FUR TO BONE

Los Angeles— Kinsey/DesForges is pleased to present Virginia-based artist Ryan McLennan’s debut solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition of new paintings opens with a reception on April 5th from 7-10pm, and continues through May 10th, 2008.

McLennan is part of a vanguard of young painters who have twisted the conventional, naturalist approach to depicting animals and environmental themes in mischievous ways to the serious end of drawing attention to environmental issues. In the tradition of great naturalist painters such as John James Audubon, McLennan has become both student and advocate: inspired by many hours spent in the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains, this VCU grad and Virginia native has undertaken an in-depth inquiry into the evolution and displacement of North America wildlife, and his understanding of changing patterns in their behavior, incurred as a direct result of changes and destruction to their natural habitats, is evidenced in his maturing body of work.

As informed as McLennan is regarding scientific developments in the changing environment, his works are first and foremost allegorical; these finely rendered large-scale paintings on paper are on first view whimsical, yet the darker nature of their message cannot be denied. Like Edward Hicks “The Peaceable Kingdom” which depicts a post-apocalyptic future in which the natural food chain has been disbanded and all manner of creatures have become friendly companions, McLennan depicts nature upended, and in so doing he means to tell us the story of our own undoing—there is at once something innocent and suspect taking place in these barren tableaux.

Figuring prominently among the skeletal trees which serve as broken shelter to the smaller wildlife depicted in his paintings are fantastical plant-like bears in various repose—draped,

hanging, prone and often torn, McLennan's topiary bears serve not only as sustenance and shelter for playful groupings of elk and raccoons, moose and foxes, but pointedly appear to be the only greenery available to them. The bears, in being devoured, suggest a kind of symbiosis, but could also serve as effigies for a human society that has upset the balance of global ecology.

McLennan received his BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2002 and has recently been awarded a fellowship through the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and his work is to be featured in the upcoming issue of *New American Paintings*.

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Established in 2001, **Kinsey/DesForges** (formerly BLK/MRKT Gallery) exhibits and promotes a diverse group of new and emerging local, national and international contemporary artists. We are located in Los Angeles in the Culver City Art District. Artists include Tiffany Bozic, Ian Francis, Gregory Euclide, José Parlá, Marion Lane and Dave Kinsey. Hours are Tues – Fri 11-6pm and Sat 12-6pm. www.KinseyDesForges.com

For more information, or to schedule a private viewing or interview with the artist, please contact Jana DesForges.